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OPEN! SESAME!

BY FLORENCE MARRYAT (MRS. ROSS-CHURCH), AUTHOR OF 'LOVE'S CONFLICT,'
'NO INTENTIONS,' ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XI.

'I SHALL WAIT, EVERIL.'

IT is the twenty-fifth of May. Only two days wanting to the one on which Miss West-Norman comes of age; and two people at least—namely, herself and Captain Staunton—are ruminating on the fact. It is a warm, sultry afternoon, and they are seated, side by side, on a green knoll that overlooks the park, and under the young tender shade of some newly-clothed beech-trees that screen it from the observation of the house. Both are silent. He is doing little else than pluck the blades of grass that grow within his reach and scatter them again, whistling in a low tone as he does so, and raising his large dark eyes every now and then to seek the face of his companion; whilst she is evidently dreaming—of the Future, may-be, or the Past—and though apparently unmindful of her lover's pleading glances, with the contented, restful expression on her countenance which is so often to be seen upon that of a woman who sits silent but happy in the presence of the man whom she loves best. It is true that Maurice Staunton has never actually spoken to her of marriage; but he has

told her, by looks, and words, and actions, that he loves her; he has even drawn from her the confession that she loves him in return; and Everil has not the slightest doubt but that it is a settled thing between them, and when the proper time comes to speak, he will formally propose for her hand. Were it not for this formidable decision respecting the Earl that she is called upon to make, she sees no reason why anything further should ever be said upon the subject which lies nearest to their hearts—except, indeed, to fix the wedding-day. For the lovers of the present century are not in their manners a bit like the priggish, prudish forefathers we have laid quietly to rest in the family vault. Kneeling is absurd; letters are compromising; and very few of them would get through a formal proposal without laughing. A few long looks serve to pave the way for their intentions; a few warm whispers break the ice; and then some day, when the looks and the whispers have been somewhat longer and warmer than usual, by pure accident the lips come together, and the hurried

question, 'Do you like me well enough to marry me?' settles the business, as thoroughly as ever their grandfathers did after scraping, and bowing, and blushing through a couple of agonising hours.

I wonder how many women married within the last half century have been formally proposed to. The elegance of language and of diction for which the Sir Charles Grandisons of the eighteenth century were famous has been entirely relegated to the servants' hall, where it makes its appearance between the covers of the 'The Complete Letter-writer,' and serves to convey the tender aspirations of Jeames to the longing ears of Mary. But Lady Blanche and Lord Ronald, up in the drawing-room, do not take half that trouble. He squeezes her hand one day, rather more fervently than etiquette demands; and when she pouts and says he has no 'right to do it,' he tells her to give him the right. 'You seem to have taken it already,' replies her Ladyship, with a smile that tries hard to be a frown. Whereupon his Lordship claims several other rights of a more impressive nature, and has put the engagement ring on her finger before Jeames has transcribed half of the love-letter which he is writing so carefully at spare moments in his pantry.

So Everil West-Norman believes that, as far as she and Maurice Staunton are concerned, all has been said that need be said between them—only sometimes she hopes he will speak more plainly to her before the twenty-seventh. She is not situated like other girls—she cannot indefinitely prolong the blissful present: besides, when she publicly announces her determination not to marry Lord Valence, she may be subjected by her anxious guardians to a closer ques-

tioning than will be agreeable. And added to this, though Agatha has assured her that Maurice is fully informed of all the conditions of her father's will, Everil does not entirely trust Agatha, and foresees the awkwardness of the situation should Captain Staunton speak to her guardians before he is entirely cognisant of the responsibility he will take upon himself in marrying her. It is this of which she is dreaming, as she sits quiet and absorbed, gazing with her beautiful eyes across the spacious park. She wishes Maurice would speak more definitely, though she almost feels disloyal to her lover's faith in wishing so; but she cannot be the first to moot the subject: it would look so much like asking him if he really meant to marry her. She has thought several times lately that he wished to put the question point-blank: she feels that, at any rate, it cannot be much longer delayed—perhaps it is coming even to-day; and as she thinks so, she trembles at the near approach of what she wishes. The silence between them has been long unbroken. As Everil muses, she feels that Staunton's eyes are on her face, and the conscious blood rises beneath his gaze. He seems to answer her very thoughts:

'Miss West-Norman!—Everil!—may I speak to you?'

She has been expecting it so long and patiently; yet now that it comes, it falls upon her like a shock.

She starts and colours, and is all agitation.

'Of what?—I do not know! We have been out here so long, Captain Staunton, I really think we ought to go in.'

'No! no!—not yet!' he urges, as he gains possession of her hand. 'You have been so good to me, Everil!—you have let me read so

plainly the secret of your heart, that it emboldens me to ask for it!

'Oh, stop! pray stop!' she cries, a sudden unaccountable terror taking hold of her lest he should speak too soon. 'Captain Staunton, I have so much to tell you!'

'And I have so much to tell you, my dearest!' he says passionately, as he seizes hold of her dress and tries to detain her. But she breaks from him quickly, and stands at a little distance, heated and trembling. At that moment her name is heard ringing out from the house.

'Hark!—they are calling me! I am wanted!—I *must* go!' she says, in her anxiety to run away anywhere for a few minutes and hide the agitation that is mastering her.

'Oh! very well; pray go!' he answers, in a quick tone of offence. 'Their business, whatever it may be, is doubtless more important than mine.'

At that she stands still and regards him sorrowfully.

'It is not that, Maurice—you must know it; but—but—I have a great deal to say to you, and it were better we were undisturbed. Let me have a few minutes to see what they want of me—and—and—to collect myself—and I will return to you here.'

By this time he has risen, and stands beside her.

'My love!' he utters fondly, as he looks into her blushing face, 'and how long am I to wait for you?—the moments will seem hours till you come back, Everil.'

'I know what you would tell me,' she whispers, 'and I want to gather strength to bear it, Maurice.'

His answer is a kiss. He has thrown his arm about her, and he draws her face close to his, and kisses her upon the lips. She

does not stir or speak. She believes the marriage of their lips is but the forerunner of a higher, holier union, and she resigns herself to the happiness of feeling she is his. But when he releases her she is pale as death, and the step with which she leaves him falters. She cannot find who called her from the portico. She thinks it must have been Agatha; but all the lower part of the house is empty, and there is no appearance of the widow to be seen.

Miss West-Norman toils mechanically up the stairs. Now that she has left her lover, she wishes with all a woman's perversity of judgment that she had not done so. What a simpleton he must think her, to run away at the most important crisis of her life! Still she is thankful for these few moments of quietude in which to assume the dignity befitting the occasion. She penetrates Mrs. West's own apartment, but it is vacant; and then she looks into that occupied by Lord Valence, which is next to it, and of which the door stands open. That also is empty—there is no necessity for her to enter in order to assure herself of the fact; but his writing-table stands near the open window, and the loose papers with which it is covered are fluttering about. Instinctively, with a woman's love of order, Everil advances to replace them, although her thoughts are all by that green knoll overlooking the park, to which she hesitates to return because she so much longs to do so. She gathers up the scattered manuscripts rapidly and energetically, and piles them on Lord Valence's desk. As she does so, the large scrawling writing on the topmost paper catches her eye; the letters are so bold she cannot avoid seeing them. As she reads their purport, she changes colour and her breast heaves.

'Everil West-Norman will marry you, and she will love you; though not yet. But have patience! The fruit that is longest in ripening is sweetest when it is ripe.'

The heiress, with eyes glowing more angrily each time they light upon the characters, peruses this sentence three or four times; she turns the paper over and over, as though she would find out with whom it had originated; and when she has fully mastered its meaning, and the fact that it is anonymous, her fury is without bounds.

'Well!'—with set teeth and hurried breathing, 'I call this a very delicate, gentlemanly thing for Valence to do—to discuss the probabilities of my marriage with him (on which he would not even allow me to speak the other morning) with some of his vulgar farmer friends up in Ireland. Look at this handwriting. Who but an illiterate clod could ever form such scrawling, ungainly letters? But if it were a duke it would be the same thing.'

"'Everil West-Norman will marry you, and she will love you, though not yet." I never heard such a piece of impertinence in all my life! Who is this fellow who dares to anticipate my decision, and to communicate his ideas to Valence? What respect can Valence have for me that he can allow my probable actions in so delicate a manner to be discussed by a stranger? And the creature writes as confidently as though he were an indisputable authority on the subject.

"'Everil West-Norman will marry you." Oh, will she, my unknown friend? She would just as soon marry you, who have evidently not attained the first elements of knowledge.

"And she will love you, though not yet." Never! If I had ever

entertained the least idea (which I never have) that it might ever be in the remotest manner possible (which it never could be) I should arrive at the faintest imitation of love for my cousin, this unparalleled piece of impertinence on his part would have convinced me to the contrary. I knew he was an hypochondriac, and had softening of the brain, or something very much like it, and was a most dull and uninteresting companion; but I did think—yes, I *did* think—that my own father's own brother's son was a gentleman. But to care so little for my feelings, my dignity, the false position in which I am placed—to care, in fact, so little for myself as to let his bumpkin friends write of me in this familiar style to him, it is abominable—not to be endured by any woman.

'Marry him!' I never meant to marry him. Nothing on earth should have induced me to do it, as I have said from the very beginning; but after this I'd see him at the bottom of the sea first. Let him take my money!—at this remembrance great hot tears, like heat-drops after thunder, commence to gather in her beautiful angry eyes—'it's all he wants, the avaricious, mercenary creature!—and squander it upon his loutish companions, who don't even know how to write; but myself—I would die sooner. Oh! I will go back and tell it all to Maurice. He will feel for me; he will sympathise with me. These insults are not things that we can bear alone!'

She turns to leave the room as she speaks, first crumpling up the offending paper in her hands.

'I will tear it all in little pieces. I will not have my name lying about for any one to read and comment on. No! I will keep it, and when I am far beyond

his reach, I will send it back to Valence, and tell him to inform his friend how I despise them both for their want of judgment and indelicacy.'

So saying, she thrusts the paper into her bosom, and runs back to join her lover. She has no fear lest he should think her too ready to admit his advances now. Her pride has been wounded by the discovery she has made, and she flies to Staunton as to a friend in whom she may confide, and from whom she is sure to derive comfort and sympathy. She reaches the grassy knoll breathless and heated.

'How cruel to keep me waiting so long!' he exclaims, as he rises to meet her. 'Do you think I am made of iron, Everil, to be able to endure such suspense? I was very nearly following you to the house.'

'I am so glad you didn't, for I want to have a long talk with you; and here we shall be undisturbed. Maurice, are you really my friend?'

'Can you doubt it?' he says tenderly, as he draws her down beside him and encircles her figure with his arm.

'I so much want a friend,' she answers, as she reclines against him with half-closed eyes. 'Everybody professes to be so; but I look all round me, and am not sure who is true. Guardy says he loves me, but he is always urging me to act against my own conscience and inclinations. Miss Strong sides with him, and Alice stands neutral, and will give me no advice whatever. I think of all here Agatha is my best friend, for she knows my wishes, and tells me to follow them. Yet Agatha does not understand me thoroughly. She doubts my strength of purpose and knowledge of myself.'

'I doubt neither, Everil,' whispers Captain Staunton.

'I believe it, Maurice; and therefore it is that I want to speak openly to you. Oh, I have been so insulted! I have been in such a rage. I could scarcely have credited it of him.'

'Who has dared to insult you?' demands her companion loudly, rousing up, as all Englishmen do at such a supposition.

'Hush! it is nothing of which you can take notice. I shall have my revenge of him another way. You have heard the conditions of my father's will, Maurice?'

'I believe I have. Mrs. West was good enough to have some conversation with me one day respecting it. You must not think I was inquisitive or impertinent, dearest; but your cousin had guessed my presumption in loving you, and thought, in the kindness of her heart, I had better be made acquainted with the plain facts of the case, else I had never dared, in those days, even to hope that you might return my affection.'

'And she told you everything, and yet you love me! Oh, Maurice, I am so thankful! I could not have borne that you should seek me for anything beside myself.'

'How could you dream I would, Everil?'—with some show of indignation.

'Agatha told me it was so,' the girl goes on dreamily; 'but I could scarcely believe it. I suppose it was too good to appear true. But come, now, what did she tell you?'

'She assured me there was no actual engagement between Lord Valence and yourself.'

'She is right. Of course there is no engagement. My decision is not even to be asked till the day after to-morrow.'

'And what will it be then, Everil?'

'*You know!*'—with a sweet, shy blush. 'But go on. What more?'

'She said that, in the event of your not marrying your cousin, a portion of your money would lapse to his estate.'

'A portion!'—raising herself to look him in the face as she speaks. 'Oh no, not a portion. All!'

At this announcement Captain Staunton looks staggered.

'*All!* Your whole fortune!'

'Every halfpenny. Did not Agatha tell you so? She knows it as well as I do. By my father's will, in the event of my refusing to marry my cousin, the whole of my thirty thousand a year (with the exception of a few hundreds barely sufficient to support myself) goes to his estate. This is the reason they are all so anxious to persuade me to marry him.'

'But Lord Valence would never accept such a sacrifice on your part. It would be the most unparalleled act of knavery I ever heard of in my life.'

'He has no alternative—or, rather, he has no option of choice. If he does not take it, the property is to be vested in the funds of some state charities. My father instituted this clause, of course, in order to force my cousin to accept his conditions.'

'Robbing his own child, in fact, to benefit another! I never heard of such an iniquitous proceeding in the whole course of my existence,' says Captain Staunton hotly, as he rises to pace up and down the grass before her.

'He thought I should certainly elect to marry my cousin,' interposes Everil in a depressed voice.

'And if you do marry him, what becomes of your fortune then?'

'It remains, as it is now, in my own hands, until my death.'

'With the power to will it away?'

'Under certain conditions—or, at least, a part of it. But why talk of that now? It will never come to pass, although, I suppose, my poor father thought he would secure my happiness by the arrangement.'

'By giving you the alternatives of beggary or slavery! To be sent forth on the world poor and unprotected, or to be tied for life to a sickly misanthrope like Lord Valence! Why, the man looks as if a feather would knock him down.'

'That is not his fault,' she interposes, quick, like most of her sex, to take the part of the weaker side. 'Health is not of our own seeking; and I suppose my father hoped he would be strong. Valence had a long conversation with me on this subject the other morning. He told me—but I forget; it was in confidence.'

'And under the circumstances, there is, of course, every reason for you to respect his Lordship's secret,' says Staunton sarcastically.

'Oh, please don't speak like that to me! I am so low-spirited already. Only—'

'Perhaps I can guess the subject of the Earl's disclosure, if it respected his health. His sister-in-law has already informed me that he is not likely to live long.'

'Has she? Then I need lay no further restraint on myself. Yes; it is true—or, at least, he said so—that he has some secret complaint or other that will kill him in a few months at farthest. It is very sad. I hardly liked to look at him whilst he was speaking; but he was quite in earnest. He would not let me allude to the decision I am to be called upon to make, else I would have told

him at once that it cannot be, and that I shall never marry him.'

'But why not?' demands Staunton, as he stops before her.

'Why not?' The girl's heart seems almost to stop beating as she repeats his question, and gazes up into his handsome, frowning face with wild, puzzled eyes.

'Why not?'

'I repeat it—why not? It seems to me you have no alternative. It would be simple madness to give up your fortune.'

'And you would advise me to marry Valence!—you, who—'

But here indignation and bitter disappointment check her utterance. Maurice Staunton sits down again beside her, and takes her hand.

'I know what you would say, Everil—you, who love me. Yes! it is hard, God knows, for me, who love you, to give you such advice; but it is *because* I love you that I give it.'

'I do not understand—'

'Everil, I am no fortune-hunter' (and perhaps at the moment Captain Staunton, like many other worthy mortals, believes what he is saying), 'but I would not wrong you by asking you to share the miserable pittance on which I can barely keep myself. Do you think I would submit to see you dragged down from the state of luxury in which you have been reared to the discomforts of such a home as I could offer you? Would it be love to do so, Everil? Is there not something higher and more unselfish in our natures than the indulgence of a passion we can never hope to reward: the acceptance of a sacrifice we can never repay?'

'But I should be happy anywhere with you,' she whispers.

'My darling! bless you for those sweet words; only I should be less than a man to take advantage of them. No, Everil, hard as it is

to say it, your duty is plainly to follow your father's wishes.'

'And you would have me marry Valence!—marry *another*!' she exclaims, with a sharp cry of pain, as she disengages herself from his clasp, and leans her head against the trunk of a tree. Captain Staunton turns round and buries his face in the grass.

'Oh! don't torture me by speaking of it. Yet, yes, that is what I mean—you must not be sacrificed for so unworthy a creature as myself.'

'You would have me marry another!' she repeats, with almost mechanical astonishment. He starts up, and addresses her rapidly.

'Everil, the plain truth is this: we had better be brave, and face it at once. I cannot—I *will* not bring you down to penury. Why not retain your fortune, and—the hope that we may yet—*may yet* (you understand me, don't you?) come together? Marry your cousin—it will not be for long. I am assured on the best authority—he has assured you himself—that he cannot live. A few months of endurance, perhaps a few months of patience, and you will be again your own mistress. And meanwhile I—'

'You will marry some one else,' she says stonily.

'Never!—I call Heaven to witness, *never*. No other woman shall replace you. But I shall see you raised to the position you were intended to adorn—honoured and respected, surrounded by every luxury—perhaps even contented.'

'And you?'

'I shall wait, Everil,' he answers meaningly.

A dark flush, he can hardly trace from what feeling, passes over her face.

'Forgive me, dearest. I should not have said that, perhaps; but you know what I feel. I cannot

marry you; but whilst you live and I live, I shall never let go the hope of doing so. Why should we disguise the truth from one another? You must marry the Earl—'

'I will not marry him!' she says determinately.

'Yes, yes, you will,' he answers soothingly. 'You will come to think better of this—you will recognise, as I do, that it is the only chance left for our ultimate happiness. I am your friend, Everil—your true friend and lover. Let me counsel you'—laying his hand upon her arm; but she shakes it off as though it had stung her.

'Do not touch me! You have said all you have to say, and I have listened patiently. Now you must let me go. I don't want your advice, nor your comfort. I only want to—to get away somewhere, and forget, if I can, that all this has ever been.'

And so saying, she turns from him, and, with a face pale as ashes, walks rapidly back to the house.

CHAPTER XII.

'FOR MY SAKE.'

CAPTAIN MAURICE STAUNTON, left to himself on the grassy knoll, hardly knows what to make of the interview that has passed. He loves the girl after a fashion, but he loves himself the better of the two; and the intelligence he has just received is a great shock to him.

Everil West-Norman, encircled by a magic halo of rank and riches, is a divinity before whose shrine he would sacrifice everything, even to his own soul; but Everil West-Norman, clad in no panoply but that of her own love and beauty, and looking to him for protection and support, is quite another

thing. He may love her under any aspect—so he tells himself; but he cannot afford to worship her unless he is paid for it. Born of a good family, and a wealthy family, so far as its elder branches are concerned, Maurice Staunton has been reared in as luxurious and far more selfish a school than our heroine; and the result of his training has been to make him thoroughly discontented with his present lot, and disposed to consider himself aggrieved much above the majority of his fellow-creatures because he was not born with a golden spoon in his mouth. He is a younger son, dependent on his own resources, and every one who is better off than himself appears to him in the light of an enemy. He knows that he has a handsome face and figure, and to enable him to barter these valuable commodities by exchange for an heiress has been the constant aim of his sister, Lady Russell, with whom he is prime favourite. It was to this end she invited him to Greenock Park, and, with the aid of her dear friend Agatha, threw him in Miss West-Norman's way; and to find that he has not only wasted his time and energy, but had his own wings slightly scorched in the enterprise, is a mortifying discovery to the young officer. The first means by which, on being left alone, he tries to console himself is by swearing heartily at Agatha West.

'If that confounded little meddler had not interfered in the business, I should have heard the true state of the case long ago. But trust a woman for making a hash of it if she can. And what has Maria been about to mislead me as she has done? A curse on both of them! Here have I made that poor dear girl and myself miserable for nothing. The whole of her fortune! I am sure Mrs.



OPEN RESAMER

Drawn by F. A. Foster

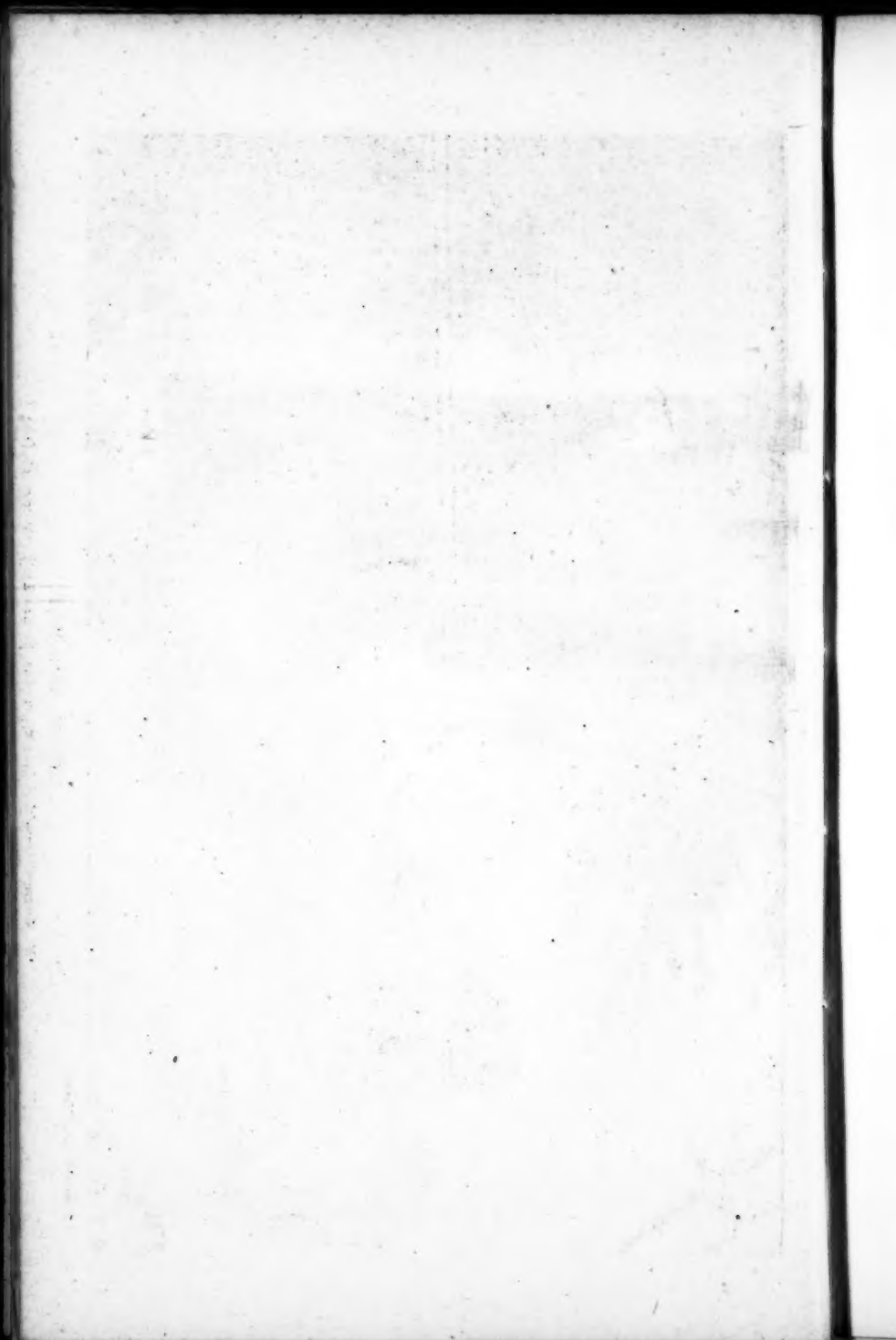
"The strongest, bravest from his days and leans his head against the trunk of a tree."



Drawn by F. A. Fraser.]

OPEN SESAME!

"She disengages herself from his clasp, and leans her head against the trunk of a tree."



West told me that a portion only went to Valence. But Everil is not likely to be mistaken. Thirty thousand pounds!—lucky dog!—and coupled with such a woman, too. I wish I were he!

Then he rises, and still ruminating, with his eyes upon the ground, begins to walk towards the house.

'But a great chance lies before me yet. I shall do as I told Everil. *I shall wait.* Married to Lord Valence under certain conditions ("certain conditions," of course, mean lack of issue), her fortune remains in her own hands. Patience—and I shall hold the cards. There will be no issue—not likely to; but in a few months a widowed, wealthy countess—from whose heart I will take good care my image has not faded. Dear, sweet Everil!—she loves me—I can read it in every tone of her voice—and she is not a woman to forget. The first throw has proved against me; but it is the staying horse that wins. At any risks, she must marry her cousin.'

'Why, Captain Staunton, what are you dreaming of?'

Absorbed in his reflections, he has run nearly into the arms of the little widow. His countenance becomes still more overcast. He is not at all in the mood to receive her advances with equanimity.

'I beg your pardon,' he says coldly.

'What a tone! Has anything occurred to vex you? Where is Everil? I called to her about an hour ago to take a drive with me to Hereford; but, as there was no response, I concluded she was lying *perdue* somewhere in better company than mine. Have you not seen her?'

'Miss West-Norman quitted me about a quarter of an hour ago.'

'Where has she gone?'

'I don't know.'

'Why did she leave you?'

'I really cannot inform you.'

'You haven't quarrelled, I hope?'

'Certainly not! What should we have to quarrel about?'

'But there's something strange about you, Staunton, that I can't make out,' says Mrs West, as she raises her parasol in order that she may scrutinise his features. 'Have you and Everil come to an understanding yet?'

'Did we ever misunderstand each other?'

'Oh! you know perfectly well what I mean. Have you spoken to her? Is it all right?'

'Have I proposed, you would say? I have not.'

'But why this delay?'—anxiously. 'Do you mean after all to let her slip through your fingers?'

'I cannot tell you.'

'How provoking you are! You talk in this way on purpose to tease me! There only remains one day between this and the twenty-seventh, and you promised me you would speak before then.'

'I have not yet broken my promise.'

'But do not put it off too long. Everil is a strange, unaccountable kind of creature, and were she once drawn into any sort of a decision respecting dear Valence, nothing on earth would make her retract her word. She has such absurd old-fangled notions about honour, and all that sort of rubbish.'

'Why are you so anxious she should marry me, Mrs. West?'

'Only for your sake and her own, Staunton,' says the widow, blushing and twisting about her parasol. 'She loves you so much, you would make the dear girl so happy. And then look at poor Valence! Can I see her sacrificed and him too (I have no hesitation in saying "and him

too") for a mere chimera—a false sense of right? You will speak to her, dear Staunton, will you not?—sweetly—'you will not keep her longer in suspense?'

'I don't know.'

'You don't know! You don't seem to know anything this afternoon. You are very incomprehensible to me. And I cannot say I think you are treating our dear Everil well.'

'Miss West-Norman appears perfectly satisfied with my treatment of her. Remember, Mrs. West, that you are arguing without premises. But I must wish you good afternoon. It is nearly five o'clock.'

'And are you not going to stay to dinner?'

'Not this evening, thank you. Maria has company, and I promised her to return.'

'But, Captain Staunton,—turning to detain him,—'you will be here to-morrow, will you not?'

'Most likely.'

'And on the twenty-seventh? Everil would be terribly disappointed to miss you on her birthday, and especially with the trying ordeal she has to undergo. Poor darling! she will need your help to assist her through it. Fancy her having to make her little confession all alone! But with you by her side, it will be nothing. I believe her guardians meet at eleven. Of course you will be here by that time?'

'I shall be ready to support Miss West-Norman whenever she may require me, Mrs. West; you may rest assured of that,' the young man replies gravely, as he lifts his hat and leaves her. She looks after him for some minutes in silence, biting her lip meanwhile.

'There's been a row of some kind between those two people,' she thinks as she does so. 'I

hope to goodness not a serious one. What can it be? I must find out, and patch it up. It would never do for them to quarrel just now. Everil is capable of anything when in a rage. Pshaw! it can be but a lovers' quarrel, and they'll be all the fonder for it afterwards. He looks as miserable as he can be, and I daresay she is crying her eyes out upstairs. Perhaps, after all, it's the best thing that could have happened. They'll become so "spoony" over their reconciliation that she will have the heart to refuse him nothing. As soon as I see Everil I shall find it all out, and then I can write to Maurice by the evening's post.'

But Mrs. West does not find it all out as easily as she anticipates. Everil West-Norman appears at the dinner-table, a shade paler perhaps than usual, but in, apparently, higher spirits than she has evinced since the arrival of her cousin.

She laughs and talks with Lord Valence without a trace of the reserve or coldness that has hitherto characterised her intercourse with him, although her wit too often bears in it a dash of bitter sarcasm; whilst he, relieved by the change in her manner, and not guessing at the cause that has occasioned it, appears in a better light than he has ever done before.

Mrs. West is fairly puzzled; but though she makes more than one attempt to solve the mystery, her cousin appears ready armed to drive her back from every point.

'My dear, what is the meaning of all this?' she asks, as soon as they are alone. 'Have you and Staunton quarrelled?'

'Quarrelled!—with a well-feigned look of surprise; 'I and Captain Staunton quarrelled!

What on earth should we have to quarrel about?

They are the same words he used to her.

'Oh, I don't know, darling, but lovers are apt to be a little fanciful. Why didn't he dine here to-night?'

'Lady Russell has company at Greenock, I believe.'

'Then you expect him to-morrow, I suppose?'

'I expect nothing. You know he has been used to come and go as he chooses. I conclude he will suit his own convenience. Why are you so anxious on the subject?'

'Oh, I am not anxious at all! Why should I be? Only I met him as he was going away, and I thought he looked rather glum.'

Miss West-Norman laughs.

'That was because he was going away, of course. You wouldn't have had him seem pleased, would you? Alice, dear, do look out some duets; I feel as if I should like to rattle away at the piano all the evening.'

'I wish you would persuade Lord Valence to play,' says Miss Mildmay. 'He sat down at the rectory piano the other day when he thought we were all out, and my father, who overheard him from his study, says he plays divinely. I have been longing to hear him ever since.'

'I didn't know he could play,' replies Everil. 'Does he, Agatha?'

'Oh, beautifully, my dear, when he chooses. But poor dear Valence is rather crotchety, you know, and it is not often I can persuade him to show off before strangers. I am almost afraid he would refuse your request.'

'I don't intend to give him the opportunity; I would much rather not hear him play. I hate to see a man perched upon a music-stool, and twiddling away like a

music-master. And when he adds affectation to it, it becomes abominable.'

'My dear Everil, I didn't say he was affected. How you do misjudge poor Valence! You can make no allowance for his great delicacy.'

'I didn't know he had any,' she retorts quickly, as she crushes up a certain paper that lies hidden in her bosom.

'Oh, Miss Mildmay! do take her off to the piano, and let us have an end of this,' cries the widow, with affected indignation. 'She is altogether too naughty. I shall have to send for some one to come back and help me keep you in order, Everil. You are too much for me alone.'

'You are too much for me at any time when you talk such nonsense,' replies the heiress impatiently, as she takes her seat at the instrument.

She plays, or talks, or laughs incessantly during the remainder of the evening; even going the length, at last, when Alice Mildmay strikes up a waltz, of seizing Agatha round the waist, and dancing with her till they are both out of breath.

Mr. Mildmay regards her new mood with astonishment; Miss Strong with pleasure; Mrs. West with secret perplexity and dismay, whilst the Earl is wrapt in contemplation of this fresh exhibition of his wayward cousin's capabilities.

'I have never seen the dear girl in better spirits,' says Mr. Mildmay, with evident satisfaction. 'Everil is like her old self to-night. How charming it is to see the young enjoy themselves, Miss Strong.'

'It is indeed, Mr. Mildmay. It is almost sufficient to make one wish oneself once more at the beginning of the journey. This

looks well for the twenty-seventh, doesn't it ?

'Humph ! Does it strike you in that light ? Well ! perhaps so—perhaps. But——' rubbing his chin thoughtfully—' but young women are a puzzle to me ; an incomprehensible puzzle that I shall never make out.'

'Hot-tempered, domineering, "slangy" in talk, and boisterous in manners,' thinks Lord Valence from the sofa, whence he is furtively regarding her. "'Tis a pleasant prospect that lies before me. But there is one comfort—it will not be for long.' And with a sigh he returns to the study of the book which he is perusing.

At last the ordeal is over—blessed bed-time has arrived, and our heroine, with flushed cheeks and feverishly bright eyes, can bid all her guests good-night, and stand face to face with her life's future.

It is a terrible penance she has passed through ; but she has played her cards well and bravely, like many a woman before her, and for the first few moments that she is alone she feels almost victorious. For if there is a mental fight that sears the freshness of the human heart and brings wrinkles and grey hairs before their time, it is that which so often takes place between a woman's pride and love. The grief that we may lawfully indulge in may be, for the time being, very bitter, but it does not permanently harm us ; for Nature's remedies are never hurtful. On the contrary, it rather keeps us young, and sympathetic ; for none can act the part of comforter like those who remember what they have suffered for themselves. But the misery that dares not disclose its source is quite another thing. The heart is well-nigh bursting to confess it, even to its own shame ; but the brain, backed up by pride and a terrible fear of what 'the

world will say,' keeps down the heart, and the conflict between these two great powers hardens instead of softening, and brings every sort of evil in its train. Passive natures sink beneath such a burden ; but it makes strong natures reckless. And if ever a woman was in a condition to say or do reckless things, it is Everil West-Norman, on the night of which we are speaking. She is so excited that she almost dances into her bedroom ; and so long as Parsons is beside her, she hums snatches of songs, and rattles about all the silver and ivory paraphernalia of her dressing-table, as though she were too happy to be quiet. But even the tedious process of being undressed by a lady's-maid must come to an end at last : and then Everil West-Norman is alone.

ALONE !

She tries to keep up the little farce with herself even then : the humming becomes rather more feeble, it is true, and her lips quiver as they try to form the notes ; but she goes on manfully for a few seconds, till she suddenly remembers that the air she is singing is a favourite with Maurice Staunton, and at that remembrance breaks down.

Breaks down as utterly and completely as the weakest simpleton that walks this earth with a heart within her breast could do, and all the more utterly and completely for the restraint she has hitherto placed upon herself.

She does not blame her lover—there is no true woman but what can find, in the first blush of disappointment, an excuse for the man who has deceived her—but she blames her father, and her fortune, and herself, and everybody and thing but Captain Maurice Staunton, for the misery that has befallen them.

She wonders why Providence ever brought them together, or why she had not the sense to see how events would turn out, and avert them long ago, or the courage to go boldly up to her lover and tell him the truth. She pours out the vials of her mental wrath on the head of Mrs. West for encouraging Staunton to come to Norman House; on her guardians, for opposing him; on Miss Strong for not having warned her of the coming danger; on the Earl, for not having died long ago, and left her to her own devices: on every one but the real delinquent. She cannot recognise the intense selfishness of which Staunton has been guilty in engaging her affections without any certainty as to the issue of his courtship: she *will not* see (not in these first hours of misery) that he has wooed her for her money, and not for herself. She can only deplore their mutual ill-fortune, and the wicked blindness and hard-heartedness of those who have brought it upon their suffering heads. She can only weep herself blind over the remembered fascinations of her admirer, and the prospect of passing her life without him. She can only, in fact, be miserable!

In the midst of her lamentations (she has cast herself across the bed, the better to enjoy the luxury of weeping), a knock is heard upon her bedroom door.

She leaps to a standing position, and hastily dries her eyes.

'Who is there?' It is Parsons who answers—

'A note, please, miss, from Greenock Park; and as the man said it was very particular, I thought I had better bring it up to you.'

'Any answer?'

'No, miss; no answer—only you was to have it at once.'

'Very well; give it me.' And she

opens the door only wide enough to receive the envelope. She carries it to the dressing-table, and breaks the seal. It is from Maurice Staunton:

'MY DEAREST EVERIL,

'My heart has been trembling with fear ever since you left me this afternoon, lest you should have misinterpreted the reason of my advice. You think, perhaps, that I am cold—indifferent; that I do not feel in its utmost bitterness the pang of surrendering you to another. Oh! how little you know me! Could you but read my heart, you would see I would rather brave death than part with you. But death would be nothing, compared with the pain of dragging you down to a life of poverty and perhaps of struggle. Everil! I have been weak—I have been foolish. Led on by my love for you, I have said and done things which I had the right neither to do nor to utter.

'A thousand times I have warned myself of danger; but I little thought I was courting danger for you as well. Pity me—and try to forgive me. You were born to fill a higher and more important station than I can offer you; and I ought to be proud to see you attain it. I am bold enough to write this, then, to entreat you to reconsider the decision you expressed to me of not marrying according to your father's wishes. I know that you are brave and strong, and for the moment it may appear an heroic deed to give up everything sooner than act against the dictates of your heart: but think if you will be benefited by it. The Earl will usurp your fortune; and shall we (oh, Everil! may I be daring enough to use that word *we*?) be brought any nearer through your poverty? Rather, will not your refusal to

agree to this marriage cut off the last ground from beneath my feet?

'Everil, if you will not secure your prosperity for your own sake, do it for mine; for me, who love you dearer than myself, or how could I see you given to another? Under existing circumstances, nothing would induce me to marry you. The world has called me thoughtless—it shall never say that I am wicked. And I love you far too devotedly to do you so cruel a wrong. The present, then, must be for me dark and gloomy. I am a man, and I will bear it as a man; but my future *I leave in your hands*. If you have ever loved me, do not crush the last hope I cherish of possessing you.

'Your devoted,

'MAURICE.'

* * *

She reads this grandiloquent epistle several times, and then she falls to weeping over it, poor soul! and kissing it, and persuades herself that the writer is one of the most magnanimous creatures she has ever known. She is a clever woman, but her eyesight is not very clear just now, and she cannot perceive that Captain Staunton's professions of attachment will not hold water.

On the contrary, she votes him higher-minded, more generous, and more unselfish than she can ever hope to become; and thinks of him, sacrificing all his deepest feelings on her account, as of some tender true-souled martyr who prefers the fiery stake or the gibbet to a compromise with his great sense of honour.

She passes a miserable night; but it is despair, and not wounded pride that fills her heart, and she suffers for Maurice Staunton as much as for herself. When she descends to breakfast the next morning, the excited, variable

mood has settled down again, and she is simply silent and despondent; which revives all Mrs. West's fears as to her having had a misunderstanding with Staunton. There is a great bustle going on, both outside and inside of Norman House, that day, making preparations for the coming of age on the morrow, and the little widow fidgets about incessantly, in her restless anxiety to know how it is all to end; but Everil is as uncommunicative as the grave. General Hawke arrives in the course of the afternoon, and his first effort is to gain an interview with Mr. Mildmay.

'Well, Mildmay, has the girl told her intentions yet?'

'She has not said a word to me on the subject.'

'Nor to the Earl?'

'Nor to the Earl.'

'She means to take him, then.'

'I don't think so: she has obstinately refused to listen to any of my suggestions regarding Captain Staunton, and the young man has been here incessantly since your departure. I am almost sure, too, that Everil cares for him. Were it not so, I should still hope she might decide in favour of her cousin: as it is, I am certain she will not.'

'Pooh! nonsense! What reason is there against it?'

'She will never act against the dictates of her affections.'

'Pshaw! what has affection to do with it? She is not such a fool as to part with her fortune for the sake of a passing fancy. I told you she would marry the Earl a month ago, and you contradicted me. I repeat it: she will marry the Earl.'

'I hardly know what to say or to wish,' replies Mr. Mildmay. 'To see her impoverished for the sake of a fellow like Staunton would be a terrible misfortune; but to feel

that she had sold her affections, far worse — I wish to-morrow were over, and we knew for a certainty what she intends to do.'

'She will marry the Earl,' repeats the old General, like an obstinate old parrot that pertinaciously sticks to one sentence. 'But come, Mildmay, let us join his Lordship in the grounds. It seems to me that we are going to a great deal of useless expense about tents. The weather is fine enough. Why the deuce can't the people sit under the trees, and turn their dinner into a picnic? It would be much pleasanter.'

'But not so complimentary, General. You forget that the majority will be Everil's tenants, and to consult their feelings becomes a necessity. The arrangements have been made upon a scale truly magnificent; but it was our ward's express orders that it should be so. She has superintended most of them herself. The dancing-booth is like a West-End ball-room.'

'Absurd nonsense!' grumbles General Hawke, as they leave the room together. 'And what does his Lordship say to it?'

'Oh, Lord Valence has not expressed an opinion on the subject; nor, indeed, has he any right to do so. At what time to-morrow do you propose to receive our ward's decision?'

'At what hour do the guests arrive?'

'The tenant farmers and villagers at eleven, the garden party at three. Dinner is to be served for the former in the large tent at two, and a *déjeuner à la fourchette* for the latter in the dining-hall at five o'clock. I daresay the gentle-people will have all taken their departure by seven. The tenantry will remain to dance and enjoy themselves as long as they please, but they need not interfere with

us. The bonfires are to be lit at ten. This is the programme of the day, as far as I can remember.'

'Twelve hours of folly, feasting, and waste of money,' grumbles the General. 'Well, tell Miss Everil from me, Mildmay, that we shall be waiting in the drawing-room at ten in the evening to receive her decision. This will give her more time for reflection, and she won't find it so easy, after indulging in a whole day's dissipation, to renounce the means by which such an effect has been produced. I know women better than you do, Mildmay.'

'Perhaps so, General. I will not argue the point any further with you; but I have no doubt myself upon the subject.'

* * *

The twenty-seventh of May passes under the most favourable of auspices. Everything goes right. The tenantry are enthusiastic, and enjoy themselves to the utmost; the company assemble to a man, and do ample justice to the *déjeuner à la fourchette*. Nothing fails of the end to which it was appointed; and amongst the crowd, robed in a dazzling costume of blue and white, with a chip hat crowned with blue feathers shading her lovely features, moves incessantly the mistress of Norman House. There is not a suspicion amongst the company that her tenure of all this property hangs on her heart's decision. They believe there is no doubt about her inheritance, and, followed by many an envious eye, she goes from tent to tent to hear her health drunk, and to say a few kind words in response. But at last her gracious task is over. The tenantry, who appear to have consumed sufficient beef and veal to last them for a month, have given

over eating, and lie scattered about the park sward recruiting themselves for the pleasures of the evening to come; and the more aristocratic of her guests, who have also proved by far the more fatiguing to entertain, have cleared the dining-tables to the best of their ability (ladies and gentlemen can eat on occasions as well as their poorer brethren, and, considering how often the occasions arise for them, in a manner that does great credit to their powers of endurance), and ordered their carriages to drive home.

Everil West-Norman, harassed, fatigued, and, now that the immediate excitement is over, very dispirited, drags her feet wearily along the corridor.

'Everil, dear, they are waiting for you in the drawing-room (you know what for). Will you come?' whispers Alice Mildmay, who has been sent to summon her.

'In the drawing-room!'

In a moment she has turned so ghastly white that her friend thinks she is going to faint.

'Oh, Everil, don't look like that! Are you ill? Shall I call

Miss Strong?' cries Alice, as she throws her arm about her.

'Ill! What nonsense! In the drawing-room, did you say? Well, I am ready. Of course I am ready. I have had long enough to think about it, haven't I? Come, Alice, let us go to them in the drawing-room.'

But, as she attempts to move forward, she staggers against the wall.

'Everil, you are ill. I am sure of it.'

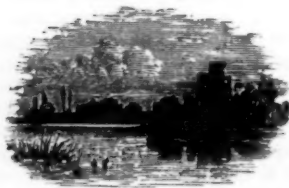
'The heat—so tired—a glass of water,' she murmurs faintly, as she closes her eyes, and lets her head fall backward.

Miss Mildmay runs to fetch what she requires.

'Thank you, dear,' she says quietly, as she returns the glass to her. 'I am all right now, and the feeling has passed away again. I cannot think how I can have been so foolish as to give way to it. Let us go to the drawing-room at once. Do you hear?—at once!'

And, as though fearful of again disclosing her feelings by delay, Everil West-Norman marches straight to the apartment in question, and turns the handle of the door.

(To be continued.)



RECOLLECTIONS OF AN OLD HABITUÉ.

THE THÉÂTRE DU PALAIS ROYAL.

WHEN a man dines at the Frères Provençaux, or any other of the *restaurants* within hail of the Café de la Rotonde, the chances are ten to one that, if not elsewhere engaged, he will finish his evening at the Palais Royal. 'L'occasion,' says the proverb, 'fait le larron;' and it may be asserted with equal truth that the tempting vicinity of Véry, Véfour, and even the Café de Corazza to the 'little theatre' has largely contributed to the prosperity of the latter. And this is as it should be; for as nothing is more conducive to digestion than a hearty laugh, so I should like to know where that desirable commodity can be more easily procured than in the tiny *bonbonnière* which forms the subject of the present article, and of whose existence this year of grace 1874 brings with it the forty-third anniversary!

The opening of this temple of Momus dates from the 6th of June, 1831; and the first piece represented within its walls was a prologue, bearing the singularly inappropriate title, 'Ils n'ouvriront pas.' It began its career under the management of M. Dormeuil père, and is still, after a long lapse of years, presided over by M. Dormeuil fils; perhaps the most triumphant example on record of hereditary legislation. I doubt, indeed, whether any dramatic venture has ever experienced a similar uninterrupted flow of good fortune. Its annals present fewer ups and downs than those of any other Parisian theatre; it has had its share of unsuccessful pieces certainly, but as at Waterloo the

vacant places in our infantry-squares were immediately filled up by those in the rear, so here every casual gap in the *répertoire* has been promptly repaired by the substitution of some new candidate for public favour.

One of the most remarkable features in the Palais Royal company is the perfection, or, as Mr. Curdle would term it, the 'dove-tailedness' of its *ensemble*; a most essential point, of which managers as a general rule hardly seem to appreciate the value. As a playgoer of, alas! something like forty years standing, I may say that (putting the Théâtre Français out of the question, where the traditions of the stage have always been adhered to with scrupulous fidelity) I can only recall to mind three other instances where equal attention has been paid to this (in my opinion) most important element of success. I allude to the Olympic, under Madame Vestris's management; to the Gymnase, as at present directed by M. Montigny; and thirdly, to that exquisite little Thespian *bijou*, the Prince of Wales's Theatre.

If M. Dormeuil the elder, when he first assumed the reins of government, could have foreseen that two of his young *pensionnaires* would subsequently rank among the brightest ornaments of the Comédie Française, I doubt whether he would have consented to cancel their engagements. Had he not done so, Samson and Regnier might have proved dangerous rivals to Sainville and Ravel, and immortalised some half a dozen farce writers; but it is a question whether even the last-named

gentry would have deemed their extra laurels sufficient compensation for the loss of Figaro, Scapin, and the Marquis de la Seiglière!]

Dormeuil had been in his day an actor at the Gymnase; but his histrionic abilities never soaring above the 'respectable' order, he wisely abandoned the sock and buskin for the managerial cabinet, where he was far more qualified to shine: it is, indeed, mainly to the tact and unerring critical judgment, both of pieces and performers, displayed by him during a long series of years, that the Palais Royal owes the lion's share of its artistic and financial prosperity. He was admirably seconded by his *régis seur* Coup part, one of the few (then) surviving members of the Caveau, and himself a *chansonnier* of no mean repute. He was a perfect martinet in the exercise of his functions; and in the matter of fines, especially, might be considered adamant. One particular article of the *règlement* of the theatre, subjecting the utterer of unparliamentary language to a pecuniary mulct, had been from time immemorial an unfailing source of amusement to the company; and the unfortunate Coup part was perpetually harassed by being asked for a precise interpretation of the clause. One evening he was installed in the little cage allotted to him at the top of the stairs adjoining the stage, deeply engaged in writing out *bulletins* for rehearsal, when he was interrupted by some one calling to him from the upper floor, and urging him to make haste. 'Qu'est-ce qu'il y a?' cried he, rushing out of his den. To his horror he beheld his arch-enemy, Grassot, leaning over the bannisters. 'Coup part, mon ami,' said the *farceur* in his blindest tone; 'si je t'appelais crétin—je ne te l'appelle pas—

mais enfin, si je te l'appelais, combien cela me coûterait-il?'

During his last illness, one of the actors—with all of whom, notwithstanding his oddities, he was deservedly popular—paid him a friendly visit at his lodgings at Montmartre, and remained chatting by his bedside till late in the afternoon. 'Mon garçon,' said Coup part, as the other rose to depart, 'tu es bien gentil d'être venu me voir; seulement (looking at his watch) je vais te mettre à l'amende, pour avoir manqué la répétition!'

* * * * *

The first time I ever entered the Palais Royal was in 1843; and the first actor of any eminence I saw there was Levassor, in a *pièce à tiroirs*, called 'Brelan de Trou-piers.' Achard had recently seceded from the company, and his departure had left his rival (born like himself, singularly enough, in 1808) in possession of an excellent *répertoire*, including the never-to-be-forgotten 'Indiana et Charlemagne.' The name of Levassor is too familiar to the English public to render anything more than a passing notice necessary; suffice it to remark that, like our own Charles Mathews, he was a perfect Proteus in his way. There was a natural vivacity in him which never flagged: his extraordinary versatility enabled him to assume every variety of character; and whether in light comedy, farce or burlesque dancing, I have rarely seen his equal. But his *forte* was *chansonnnette* singing, and there he was unrivalled. 'La Mère Michel aux Italiens,' 'Bonhomme,' and fifty other gems of his vocal budget have enlivened the *salons* of every European capital: nor was the *programme* of a Baden, Ems, or even Creuznach season considered complete without his periodical appearance, accompanied by his

Adus Achates, the pianist Rosenboom.

His first essay as an actor (I have it from himself) was unpropitious. The part assigned to him consisted merely of the word *Oui*, the proper enunciation of which he had studied with the utmost care. On the arrival of the critical moment, to the amazement of the audience and his own despair, 'Figurez-vous,' said he, 'la langue m'a fourché, et j'ai dit non.'

He once related to me a reminiscence of his visit to London, which amused him greatly. A certain member of Parliament (who shall be nameless) gave him one evening an admission to the Strangers' Gallery of the House of Commons, for the purpose of hearing him speak on a particular question. The debate proceeded in due course, and at length up rose the donor of the ticket; no sooner had he opened his mouth, than a storm of coughing, scraping of feet, and every imaginable noise, broke forth from all parts of the house, which completely drowned his voice; so that, after a few ineffectual pantomimic gestures, the luckless orator was forced to resume his seat, without having uttered a single audible word. 'Ah! pour le coup,' continued Levassor, 'quand j'ai vu cela, je me suis dit, voilà un monsieur qui ferait un bien mauvais acteur; il ne connaît pas son public!'

Although several actresses, since the first opening of the Palais Royal, have largely contributed to the success of certain pieces produced there, only one can be said to have exercised, by the sole magic of her name, a preponderating influence on the receipts; and that one is *Virginie Déjazet*. During the thirteen years of her engagement, her popularity had been ever steadily on the increase; her *répertoire*, enriched by such

productions as 'Les Premières Armes de Richelieu,' 'Le Vicomte de Létorières,' and 'Vert-Vert,' had become the crowning attraction of the theatre; and so completely were the other members of the company thrown into the shade by the one pre-eminent luminary, that it was the fashion of the day to preface an intended visit to the Palais Royal by the simple phrase, 'Allons voir Déjazet!'

It would only be repeating an oft-told tale were I to attempt to record my own impressions of an artist, as justly celebrated for her talents as she is esteemed for her sterling personal qualities. I will therefore content myself with laying under contribution an excellent notice, written by her friend and comrade, *Eugène Pierron*, and abridge from its lively pages an anecdote of her early days, which may possibly interest the reader.

In 1820, *Mdlle. Déjazet*, then in her twenty-third year, was engaged at the *Théâtre Français* at Bordeaux. Being naturally fond of music, she frequently profited by the free admission accorded to the actors of the minor theatre by the management of the opera, and one evening occupied her usual post behind the scenes during the performance of *Kreutzer's* 'Princesse de Babylone.' All of a sudden, electrified by an air charmingly sung by the Princess, and utterly unconscious of what she was doing, she darted from the *coulisse* on to the stage, and seizing hold of the hand of the astonished *cantatrice*, embraced her warmly, exclaiming:

'Bravo! Madame, bravo! that is indeed singing!'

A momentary pause ensued, after which the audience, many of whom had recognised the young actress, burst into a storm of applause; and *Déjazet*, coming to

her senses, and overwhelmed with confusion, retreated rapidly into the *coulisse*.

Next day she received a summons to appear at a certain hour before the commissary of police. On her arrival, she found that functionary, attired in solemn black, writing at his *bureau*. 'What is it?' said he, without even turning his head.

'That is exactly what I was about to ask you, monsieur,' replied she.

Struck by her voice, he laid down his pen; and for the first time looked at the new-comer.

'Who are you, mademoiselle?' was his next question.

'*Ma foi*, monsieur, you ought to know, since I am here by your orders,' answered Déjazet, handing him at the same time the notice she had received.

'Ah!' said the commissary, glancing at the paper, 'you are Mdlle. Virginie Déjazet?'

'At your service, monsieur.'

'You are doubtless aware of the penalty incurred by you yesterday evening—twenty-four hours' imprisonment.'

'Imprisonment! what for?'

'Read the 13th article of the police regulations,' answered the commissary, pointing to a document affixed on the wall, 'and you will see.'

Déjazet read as follows: 'Any actor or actress appearing in sight of the audience from the *coulisses* of his or her theatre, during the performance of a piece, is liable to a fine of twenty-five francs, and twenty-four hours' imprisonment.'

'This does not concern me, monsieur.'

'How so?'

'Allow me to explain. I was at the opera last night to hear—'

'*La Princesse de Babylone*!' interrupted the commissary with a sigh. 'I know—unfortunately,

business of importance prevented me from being there myself.'

'Ah! monsieur, you missed a splendid performance!

'Indeed! how did Cécile sing?'

'Cécile! Ah, you mean the princess. Like an angel, monsieur. What a voice, what a style she has!'

'Has she not? But pray sit down, mademoiselle,' added the commissary, changing his tone, and handing her a chair with the utmost courtesy.

Déjazet, who saw how the land lay, did as she was requested.

'You admire her singing then, mademoiselle,' continued the functionary, his eyes beaming with delight: 'ought she not to be at the Paris opera?'

'Not a doubt of it, monsieur.'

'Mademoiselle, your good taste does you honour. You have a brilliant career before you.'

'Beginning with twenty-four hours' imprisonment,' replied Déjazet, slyly. 'But when I tell you,' continued she, 'that after the air she sings—'

'Deliciously!' interrupted the commissary.

'Inimitably, monsieur!' rejoined the actress. 'When I tell you that, transported with enthusiasm, I could not refrain from rushing on the stage, and embracing her!'

'Ah!' cried the other, 'bravo! I would have done the same in your place!'

'But you would not have been imprisoned for it next day. Whereas I—'

'Mademoiselle,' replied the commissary, doing his best to look serious, 'let us examine the article together. "Any actor or actress appearing in sight of the audience from the *coulisses*—"'

'But I was not in the *coulisses*, said Déjazet, 'I was on the stage.'

'True. The article says "from

the *coulisses* of his or her theatre——”

‘But my theatre is the Théâtre Français, and this was at the Opera!’

‘True again, mademoiselle; so the prison question falls to the ground. But I maintain the fine—with a slight modification. You will do me the honour of allowing me to pay you a visit, and we will talk a little about music.’

‘With pleasure, monsieur,’ replied Déjazet; adding archly, as she left the room, ‘and a good deal about “La Princesse de Baby-lone!”’

One of the most amusing actors I ever saw in his peculiar line was Alcide Tousez, with his flaxen curls, mincing walk, and irresistibly comic lisp. He seemed naturally cut out for the part of dupe; and his idiotic air of self-conceit and imperturbable stupidity materially furthered the illusion. In addition to being successively taken in or imposed upon, night after night, by every member of the company, a speciality comprising about four-fifths of his *répertoire*, Alcide was unquestionably the best representative of the *Jocrisse* family since Brunet.

I must not forget, among my earlier acquaintances at this theatre, Leménil and his wife: the former a clever bustling performer, especially good in a screaming farce called ‘*Deux Papas très-bien*,’ and the latter a smart and lively actress, the original Madame Patin in ‘*Les Premières Armes de Richelieu*,’ and one of the most daring *lanceuses de mots* I ever met with. Both have been for many years members of the French *troupe* at St. Petersburg; and, judging from the tenacity of the Russians as regards Parisian artists in general, and Dupuis and Madame Volnys in particular, I do not

expect that the Palais Royal will have another chance of re-engaging them.

We now come to three of the most astounding *farceurs* that ever convulsed an audience, the notable triumvirate, Ravel, Sainville, and Grassot. The first of these is too great a favourite in London to render any detailed description of his peculiarities necessary; for what old *habitué* of the St. James’s, or young frequenter of the Princess’s, has not applauded that incarnation of vivacity, that smirking, fidgety, elastic son of Momus, who has only to open his mouth to excite a roar, and whose slightest wink is the very quintessence of drollery! Those who have seen Ravel in his two best creations, ‘*Le Chapeau de Paille d’Italie*,’ and above all ‘*L’Etourneau*,’ *peuvent dormir sur les deux oreilles*, as the French say: they are not likely to see anything so good in a hurry!

Sainville was fully as comic, and three times as stout as his mercurial associate; the petulant restlessness of the one (in the ‘*Rue de la Lune*’ especially) harmonised marvellously with the elephantine playfulness of the other. Sainville was the only actor I have seen capable of effectively sustaining on his own shoulders the entire weight of a *Revue*, a class of pieces once very popular, and nowhere more so than at the Palais Royal. ‘*Les Pommes de terre malades*’ was, perhaps, the best specimen of the kind ever produced; and the part of *compère*, who is on the stage from the beginning to the end, and has to listen to every successive newcomer in turn, devolved as a matter of course upon him. Several excellent pieces, among others the ‘*Tigre de Bengale*’ (no relation, by the way, to the English ‘Bengal

Tiger'), have, since his death at Pau, in 1854, disappeared from the *répertoire*, for where could a worthy substitute be found, uniting such natural *bonhomie* with such an inexhaustible fund of genuine humour? During his latter years, he suffered severely from a complication of divers disorders, of which the gout was among the mildest: and I have often heard the laughter of the audience still ringing before the curtain, while poor Sainville, after staggering with difficulty behind the scenes, was lying breathless and exhausted on one of the benches in the *foyer*. So true is it, alas! that 'tout n'est pas rose dans le métier!'

No greater contrast could be imagined than between the burly, jovial Sainville, and the angular, hatchet-faced Grassot—the most incomparable grotesque of his day—whose very name was an absurdity, he being certainly the reverse of *gras*, and anything but *sot*. He could scarcely be called a comedian, nor did his gestures savour of the classic school; his voice resembled the music of a saw or a nutmeg-grater, and a raven with a cold in its head could alone have hoped to imitate his singing. His wardrobe comprised the most extraordinary collection of nondescript garments that ever issued from a tailor's workshop; no patterns were too glaring, no checks too 'loud' for him; and when fully equipped in a costume, every accessory of which skirted the utmost limits of eccentricity, he presented an *ensemble* of *crânerie* and chuckling self-conceit that no moral gravity could withstand.

Grassot, like many of his theatrical brethren, occupied a cheap apartment at the Batignolles, and hit upon a curious method of occasionally abridging the long walk between his home and the Palais Royal. Shaping his course

along one of the thoroughfares leading from the city to Montmartre, and *vice versâ*, he frequently overtook a funeral procession, wending its melancholy way either to the church or to the cemetery. To stop one of the coaches, and take his place among the other mourners, was the work of a moment; for Grassot, from being always dressed in sober black *à la ville*, was easily mistaken for a friend of the defunct; more especially as he was invariably provided with a fine cambric handkerchief, of which he made no sparing use. One day, however, he rather overshot his mark.

The coach in which he had obtained a seat was already occupied by three persons, neither of whom appeared unreasonably afflicted by the loss they had sustained. Grassot, seeing this, and perhaps deploring their insensibility, forthwith applied the handkerchief to his eyes, and began to sob violently, muttering in a low tone: 'Que' malheur! que' malheur! poor thing, how I pity her!'

'What do you mean by *her*?' asked the man who sat next him.

'How sad!' went on Grassot, sobbing more bitterly than ever; 'so very young!'

'Young!' retorted the other. 'He was sixty-eight last birthday!'

'It is not for him I am weeping,' said the actor, who fancied he saw his mistake, and putting on his most dignified 'tone'; 'it is not for him, but for his children!'

'He never had any,' coolly rejoined his neighbour.

Luckily at that moment the coach stopped; and Grassot, rushing out, made the best of his way home, resolving on the next occasion to adopt a better system, comprising, as he pithily expressed it, 'peu de paroles, et beaucoup de mouchoir!'

During the first ten or fifteen

years of my acquaintance with the Palais Royal, I can remember a bevy of pretty faces flitting about like butterflies, but rarely settling there. Mdlle. Nathalie, after a brief but dazzling exhibition of her diamond tiara in 'la Poudre de Coton,' abandoned us for the bait of *sociétaire* at the Théâtre Français; the *piquante* Mdlle. Ozy has long ago exchanged the pomps and vanities of a dramatic career for the *dolce far niente* of a villa at Enghien; Mdlle. Scriwaneck, the lively *cri-cri* of the *habitués*, has become 'l'actrice en voyage' in sober earnest, and did not disdain last year to give the little world of Spa a taste of her quality; and Mdlle. Duverger, whose large soft eyes worked such fearful havoc among the frequenters of the stalls, is now a Boulevard celebrity; but, faithful to her nomadic principles, wanders from Ambigu to Gaité, and from Gaité back again to Ambigu, and is 'everywhere, by turns, and nowhere long.' Nay, even Hortense Schneider, whose *ronde* in 'Mimi Bamboche' still rings in my ears, was allowed by M. Dormeuil to slip through his fingers, under the impression that she could be adequately replaced by Mdlle. Silly. Silly idea, truly!

Before speaking of the more recent additions to the company, I may as well give my readers the benefit of a short peep behind the curtain; especially as all access to the *foyer* and its environs being rigidly interdicted, they are not likely to have another opportunity of inspecting them. I do not indeed remember, during upwards of five and twenty years, to have seen at one time above two or three individuals unconnected with the theatre within these precincts, guarded more jealously than the garden of the Hesperides, and therefore naturally invested with a mysterious charm, which a very

cursorial glance at the reality suffices to dispel. For the space allotted to the entire building being extremely limited, and the major part of it occupied by the *salle*, it follows that the accommodation reserved to the actors themselves is confined to the 'strict nécessaire.'

The *foyer*, a long narrow room, somewhat resembling the saloon of a small steamer, contains not a single article of furniture beyond a clock, and a row of benches on either side, and is generally untenanted; the artists preferring to remain in their respective *loges* until summoned by the call-boy. A staircase conducting to the upper floors leads to the dressing-rooms of the male performers; those of the actresses, as well as the manager's private room, situated somewhere in the bowels of the earth, are approached by a smaller flight of stairs; at the head of which are two little compartments, separated by a wire screen, and composing the *bureau* of the *régisseur* and *sous-régisseur*. When I add, that on the fall of the curtain the musicians, not having any place of refuge within the theatre, are compelled to pass the *entr'acte* at the stage door, the reader will have as clear a notion as I can give him of the locality behind the scenes of the Palais Royal.

The two connecting links between the old *troupe* and that of our own day are Lhéritier and Hyacinthe. The first of these has gradually worked his way from a subordinate position into public favour, and may now be considered as one of the very best actors in the company. No one can gloss over a questionable witticism more cleverly than Lhéritier: with sufficient tact to feel, like Dickens's barber, that 'it is necessary to draw the line somewhere,' he contents himself with pointing the

joke, and leaving its application to his audience, who, to do them justice, are not usually dull of comprehension. He is, moreover, an excellent caricaturist; and I am indebted to him for a most humorous little sketch of his fellow-artists, Grassot, Hyacinthe, and Brasseur; under which he has written the following *triolet*, or, as he not inappropriately denominates it—*trio-laid*.

'En acceptant ce trio-laid
D'un peintre et poëte incomplet
Vous ferez le bonheur complet.
Oui, franchement ce trio l'est
Laid; mais, enfin, si tel qu'il est,
Grâce à l'indulgence, il vous plaît,
Vous ferez mon bonheur complet,
En acceptant ce triole
D'un poëte et peintre incomplet.'

Lhéritier, 10 Oct. 1855.

If Hyacinthe had lived in the time of the Romans, he would assuredly have merited the *sobriquet* of Naso; for a finer full-grown specimen than his of what is usually called the nasal organ has rarely adorned mortal visage. What the effect of his acting might be without this potent auxiliary it is impossible to say; but with it he is irresistible; and it is worth a visit to the Palais Royal merely to admire him fondly stroking this prominent feature, his eyes expanding into a vacant stare, and his mouth distended by the most idiotic leer ever seen out of Charenton. Let me conjure any reader who may happen to be in Paris on the next revival of 'La Vendetta,' not to miss it; *il m'en dira des nouvelles*. Keeley was very amusing in the English version, 'A Thumping Legacy;' but he wanted the *aplomb* and by-play of Hyacinthe.

I was present, a good many years ago, at the first appearance of a young performer in 'Le Misanthrope et l'Auvergnat,' a piece expressly written for him and Sainville, and well remember

prophesying him a brilliant career. When I add that the *debutant's* name was Brasseur, it will be acknowledged that I was not far out in my reckoning; for if we were to search all the theatres of Paris and the *banlieue*, we should hardly meet with so popular, so universal an actor. Nothing seems to come amiss to him; if a singer is wanted, 'me voilà!' says he; if a slight *can-can* be deemed advisable, Chicard or Clodoche may veil their faces, and hide their diminished heads, for there again is the inevitable Brasseur, *la jambe en l'air*, executing the most audacious flights of choregraphic fancy that ever horrified a *sergent de ville*! His successful impersonations are legion, but nowhere is he seen to more advantage than in 'Le Brésilien,' or 'Tricocche et Cacolet;' if I have a preference, it is for . . . both!

There is about as much resemblance between the comedian just mentioned and his comrade Gil Perez, as between sparkling and still champagne. Perez is neither jovial nor expansive, nor even moderately cheerful; dancing is not his forte, and singing is decidedly his *côté faible*. To look at him, you would imagine yourself in the society of a mute performing his habitual functions; so deliberate is his gravity, so utterly impassive his physiognomy. In another moment you are rocking to and fro in your stall, screaming with laughter, and literally 'doubled up' by an avalanche of inconceivable jokes and preposterous conceits! You look up again, and there is Perez, serious as ever, not a muscle in his face betraying the faintest approach to a smile, and stolidly ignoring the bursts of merriment called forth by every syllable he utters!

Ah me! what pleasant evenings

have I enjoyed in those cramped and comfortless receptacles for the human frame, so pompously denominated *fauteuils d'orchestre*! What a crowd of recollections are suggested by that everlasting curtain, whose advertisements beguile the *entr'acte* with light and instructive reading! How many old associations of the past, how many familiar faces flash across my memory as I listen to the final crash of the overture, and behold the well-known *salon*, with its venerable chairs of Utrecht velvet, and its family portraits, the like of which no Wardour Street dealer ever dreamt of!

Thierret, the matchless, unapproachable Thierret, with her audacious monologues, and still more reckless pantomime! Alphonsine, with her quiet *sainte-n'y touche* air and honeyed accents! and charming Léontine Massin, whose bewitching toilettes were the joy of the *petits cravats*, and the envy of the *avant-scènes*! Alas! poor Thierret will never enliven these or any other boards with her inimitable sallies! Alphonsine has migrated I know not whither, and pretty Mdlle. Massin has passed with arms and baggage across the Boulevard, bent on subjugating (an easy task for her!) the financial magnates of the *Chaussée d'Antin*!

A nod of friendly recognition to the indefatigable couple, Lugnet and Pellerin, to Priston, the lisping dandy of the *troupe*,* and to Lassouche (who, by the way, would be

more amusing if he were a trifle less *canaille*); and a passing but cordial homage to the bright eyes and engaging smile of Julia Baron, and my task is nearly done. Not quite, however; the old saying runs '*aux derniers les bons*,' and where could we find a better illustration of its truth than in the admirable artist I have reserved as the choicest *bonne bouche* of my theatrical bill of fare!

How Geoffroy could make up his mind to abandon the *Gymnase* after his masterly creations of '*Mercadet*' and '*M. Perrichon*,' is a mystery to which he alone has the key. How he could reject the position of *sociétaire* offered him by the *Comédie Française* is an enigma equally difficult of solution: but what freak of fancy ever induced him to exchange Balzac and Scribe for Labiche and Marc-Michel, and associate his exquisite tact and intuitive finesse with the drolleries of Gil Perez, and the *lazzi* of Hyacinthe, that, I own, 'bangs Banagher'!

However, he *is* here, and the why or wherefore matters little. May the puns of Siraudin awaken in his bosom no twinge of remorse, and the spiced couplets of Delacour sit easy on his conscience! Talent such as his must ever command a warm and ready welcome; and nowhere has it proved more attractive than in the theatre he has himself selected for its exhibition, the traditional stronghold of Parisian gaiety, the joyous and world-renowned *Palais Royal*!

C. H.

* Since dead.



AT A MAN-MILLINER'S.

MONSIEUR TROIS-ÉTOILES' admirers and customers (the terms are by no means synonymous, for admiration is cheap, and Monsieur Trois-Étoiles' dresses are costly) base their reverent regard on loftier reasons than the mere fashion of the moment. They believe in Monsieur's mission—a regenerative one—in the matter of trains, and underskirts, and *polonaises*. They consider that a male reformer was necessary, averring that women's minds are too absorbed by the study of details to be able to regulate the general principles of costume; they consider that Monsieur deserves his celebrity, his irreproachable horses, that Swiss villa at Enghien, all the moral and material harvest he has reaped, by real services rendered to the art of self-decoration. We, who judge these novices by their outward effect, are biased in our conclusions by a mean perspective of other results—bills whose totals invariably contain four figures. This is unworthy of us, I have been assured. Monsieur is an artist, and should be judged from a purely artistic point of view. 'See his *atelier*, (who would dare call it a shop or work-room?) examine his studies in the rough, unprejudiced by any fear of paying for them; and Monsieur will have one traducer the less. Such are the theories and recommendations of the Comtesse O Tempora and Maréchale O Mores. Would I, if converted, make public renunciation of the normal masculine faith? Not march to Notre Dame in the simple attire (it was but a sheet) of ancient apostates, but, according to that more terrible modern practice, put my recantation into black and white?

I would. Monsieur did not receive his customers' husbands, brothers, and fathers as a rule; but the Comtesse and Maréchale are all powerful in the *atelier*, and an exception was made in my favour.

We pass through a double door; we mount a padded staircase, hung with silk, heated like a conservatory capable of raising pines, and smelling of *poudre de riz*. Evergreens to right and left make a dwarf avenue of the staircase. There are flowers in hanging corbels—camellias and lilies; there is an eternal ascending and descending procession of pretty women: briefly, we mount Jacob's ladder. And the ladder leads to pleasant places. On the first-floor there is a busy, noiseless coming and going, the flutter and *frou-frou* of femininity, and still that perfume of flowers that neither sew nor spin, but simply deal at Monsieur Trois-Étoiles, and find that function arduous enough. On either side folding doors were opened wide, and in and out passed young girls, whose figures presented fantastic outlines, being clad in the costumes of six months hence—whose heads were strange and wonderful with unpublished chignons. These horribly progressive damsels speeded the parting customers with polite assurances of quick delivery, welcomed the coming with nice little ready-made phrases of delight and surprise. The excessive, the hyperbolic was cultivated in speech, as well as in manner and dress. The blondes were too blonde, and made one wink with their splendour; the brunes were too sombre, and depressed the observer. There was

no medium between the milk-maid's kirtle and the duchess's train. The skirts had a superabundance of plaits, or none at all. It was a panorama of fashion plates of 1883. In the first saloon sat the secretary, perched on a small platform, and ticking down every visitor that entered, the orders given, and the dates when mesdames must positively have that *falbala* or this *cotillon*. Here the Maestro is occasionally to be found bowing in his clients like a prince of the blood royal. To-day he is absent *en consultation*, it is whispered. We traversed three or four large saloons, furnished with a quiet taste that, to some minds, did the great man-milliner rather more credit than most of the garments he has named and patented. Broad oak tables were in the centre of the rooms, and spread out upon them cuttings of pink, green, yellow, and black fabrics, interspersed with delicate laces and exquisite specimens of the artificial floriculturist's art, in garlands, bouquets, and 'trimmings.' Everywhere the same subdued, decidedly genteel agitation reigned. Ladies—foreigners for the most part, and the noisiest persons present—were choosing stuffs and patterns, served by serene, abstracted, and dignified young gentlemen, who made discreet inquiries concerning 'the next article,' like so many dukes in reduced circumstances. No bustle, no verbosity or insistence. At times myrmidons came and questioned the young noblemen in rigid frock-coats as to a shade, a measurement, a combination of colours or stuffs, a novelty in trimming, a heresy in shapes; and the youths dropped a brief, dignified, disinterested answer, with the air of splenetic bards divorced from the ideal. And silently to and fro

passed the gracious young girls with novel chignons, dressed in black, and trailing through the saloons skirts that were veritable models, practical examples of Monsieur's art. I surmised that a wise trade policy dictated their presence. They were living temptations for the *clientes*, plastic realisations of what a pair of scissors would make of these cuttings on the tables. By studying those animated and perambulating canons of taste, the dullest Teuton, the most primitive Transatlantic possessor of newly-struck 'ile,' could choose her *pouff*, her bodice, her sash, without thereby exposing herself to the derision of the boulevards. The choice might be rendered quite perfect and Parisian by a consultation with a formidably dignified lady between two ages, as the French phrase politely describes the predicament into which we must all fall unless the gods love us, to whom I was told to bow as the *genus loci*. But she was frigid. Monsieur's establishment is uniformly iced to several degrees below zero—and she would have been a more than ordinarily bold Columbian who had dared solicit that dual dame's advice in the matter of stuffs and *façons*. She is the *Première*, the chief forewoman; a terrible authority, and a lady whose lessons in deportment would make the fortune of any young ladies' seminary. The hundred richest wardrobes in Paris have no secrets that she does not share. She knows when Lady A.'s green silk was turned; she knows every item on the glove budget of the Princess B. A lady to propitiate.

Monsieur was still invisible. We advanced in search of him into the farthestmost saloon, where on wonderfully lifelike manikins are hung the complete toilettes, perfected a day or two ago, and

ready for delivery. Monsieur gives his private view no less than the contributors to the *Salon*, and in a studio that will quite bear comparison with the comfortable barns of the Rue des Martyrs. The walls are one vast sheet of looking-glass, and reflect head, shoulders, and unto the last inches of the trains. From morning to night groups of well-bred enthusiasts collect around the studies, and the fumes of most delicate incense rise into the illustrious *Trois-Étoiles'* nostrils. The more extravagant costumes are generally labelled for Germany, when not, it must be said, for England. The simple creations—not quite Arcadian even these!—remain in Paris. They are studied, arranged, worked up like a five-act drama, and cost rather more—two hundred francs the stuff, six or eight hundred francs the make, or, as Monsieur's artists say, the composition. The ecstasies excited by these regenerative conceptions are almost delirious: there are breathless fits of admiration, mute rhapsodies before the decorated manikins; everything else has disappeared for the worshippers—waltzes, balls, husbands, children, lovers; the Antinous himself—above all, the Antinous would shrink into insignificance beside those pendent rags. And we grope reverently in the plaits to discover how the vaporous scarf that floats behind is attached under the sash, the primitive *raison d'être* of the flounce, the secret of the mystic marriage of Epaulette with Bodice. It is enthralling, and quite as intellectual as our daily drive round the Lac. The *Première* stands before her masterpieces, and modestly receives the felicitations of the spectators. The only drawback to the triumph is that the masterpieces in question cannot go into

decent society in the character of their present possessors. La *Première* feels this sorely; 'but then we can see them at the Opera,' is the comforting reflection suggested to her. A moving tempest of tulle, Chinese crape, and lace passes before us, borne aloft at arm's length by damsels, who disappear in its clouds. That is Madame O Tempora's dress, and the Comtesse disappears to try it on behind folding doors, through the chinks of which a white vivid light is streaming. We are left during the trying-on process in a genteel chaos of discreet young ladies, clients, and clerks. The Maestro is still invisible, but he is replaced by a young man, small, spare, and active, who dances from point to point in the midst of clerks, customers, fleuristes, show-women, cutters-out, &c., ejaculating orders in dubious French, like a well-bred but epileptic clown.

At last I am informed that the first stages of the trying-on process are over. We can penetrate into the illuminated sanctuary. The sanctuary is rather like the *coulisses* of a minor theatre. The windows are bricked up, enormous glasses are affixed to the walls. The centre of the room is void; around it on a species of counter, on sofas, chairs, and ottomans, are odds and ends of stuff, flowers, ribbons, shreds of tulle, spangles, beads:—the costumier's room before a new ballet or burlesque. A row of footlights fitted with movable shades serves in lieu of chandelier, keeping the upper part of the room in shadow, and illuminating the person and the toilette under examination as they ought to be illuminated in every decent ball-room. Here is Madame O Tempora, receiving the shower of electric light, bare necked, though it is not later than 2 P.M. without,

with a complacent equanimity that says a good deal for the strength of her nervous system. A young woman is kneeling before her, pinning up an invisible plait in the bodice, festooning a new 'effect' (amongst other ameliorations Monsieur has reformed the dress-maker's phraseology; it is now highly artistic and picturesque) at the side. Under the raised arms little girls pass to and fro, handing strips of muslin, flowers, and pin-boxes. A shred or flower is taken now and then, and plastered, with the decision of sudden inspiration, on the skirt. It is a dress rehearsal. Three times already the illustrious Trois-Étoiles has been sent for. Three times, with the air of a veteran victor at the decisive moment of a hot engagement, La Première has half opened an inner door to announce that the Maestro is about to appear. He is near at hand, in the next room, bestowing a consultation on a lady with an eyeglass, apropos of a newly-made magnificent costume, which he considers his *chef-d'œuvre*. He is right. I cast an indiscreet glance into the adjoining room when the door opens, and I must allow that the composition in question is a very poem, a piece of the wardrobe of Utopia. A dress of white *fage*, ornamented with *points de Venise*, so intertwined and involved as to make the masculine brain giddy; the corsage is cut square: the whole is rich, and withal simple. It would befit a sofa and novel at home, and not be out of place at the Orleans' garden-parties at Chantilly. The doors open wide, the Maestro appears. His person is disappointing, though undeniably Britannic. He is a pink and white dapper man, with fat and shiny face; his hair parted in the middle; his moustache pendent, and highly oleaginous.

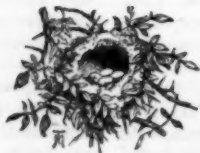
A thick white throat inclosed by a fawn-coloured ribbon, a tight-fitting frock-coat, a chronic smile, a bow that does not incline his body; these are the descriptive items remarked by a cursory observer of the great Trois-Étoiles. His voice is strong and high; his accent is boldly insular. He looks round with an absent air, then suddenly speaks. He has seen at a glance what is missing in Madame O Tempora's toilette. The train has been drawn out carefully to its full length before his arrival. 'What are you thinking of, Esther? Madame's figure must have nothing but draperies. Too low in the neck. An *épaulette en biais*. A *suçon* to the right at the hip. Take half that bouquet at the breast away. And do you go to Trouville this year, madame?' His manner is easy, assured, and well-bred. He has genius of a certain kind, undeniable tact, and imperturbable *sang-froid*. And I think he believes in his mission. He will not dress every one. He would not bestow a glance on those clumsy Germans in the first room. I hear he refuses to make for a certain popular actress, because she does not share his ideas of the capabilities of her figure, and wants her dresses too low. He converses in English with old docile trusted customers like Madame O Mores, and for her he consents to give a little professional exhibition. A messenger is despatched to remote regions, and presently the folding doors are thrown open, and two young ladies enter, preceding an extraordinary apparition. A slight damsel, whom the master calls Mary, a dark-eyed English girl, with that indescribable air known as *vieps* in Italian, *liste* in Spanish, *espigle* or *déliuré* in French, and perhaps 'wideawake' in English

advances erect and haughty, dressed as a rainbow. Like a queen of comedy she places herself in the strong white light of the foot-lamps. The electric rays smite on multitudinous scales and spangles. She glitters from head to foot like a pillar of golden ore, or like a stalactite. The exhibition has been noised through the rooms, and visitors and employées gather at the doorway, and mount on chairs to obtain a better view. Happily, Mary is not timid. She turns, bends, takes a few steps, dragging that rainbow train after her, never smiling, never heeding the spectators, simply fulfilling a mission. A noble duchess is to wear the costume at an Italian fancy ball. The coraage is made with basques, cut according to the fashion of the middle ages; it is covered with golden scales, and seems to explode under the converging lights. On the chest there is a rainbow garland; the skirt is in tulle, very long, with iris colours on the flounces. The headdress is high, with a firmament of stars set on a field of the same prismatic hues. The fan and shoes are to match, even the gloves, even the comb. The allegory is conscientiously studied in all its details. Monsieur remains cool in the midst of wild enthusiasm. His is the composed demeanour of a successful author. He has retired behind

the counter, and salutes, without bending, the noble company at the door. Miss Mary stoops slightly. Four little girls advance bearing a pile of lilac satin. The rainbow disappears, falls suddenly; and on the simple black costume left apparent, in a moment, as though by enchantment or *Porte St. Martin* machinery, the dress of an *Incroyable* is elaborated. An *Incroyable à la Watteau*, with a species of coat in lilac satin, with long tails enormous breast-flaps in pink satin. The skirt is in lilac tulle, studded with small bouquets. A tall hat in grey felt, garnished with a big posy of roses and feathers, towers on the head. A long iron-grey veil, delicate pistache, green gloves, and lilac satin slippers with pink bows, complete the costume. And Miss Mary takes a tall gold-headed cane from the hand of an attendant, and poses before us a perfect *Thermidorienne*. We are enthusiastic; the ladies emit little shrill shrieks; but the Maestro remains iceed, and receives compliments with an indifference replete with a deep eternal melancholy.

This is what I beheld under the guidance of Mesdames *O Tempora* and *O Mores*. I dare not express my personal opinion after that experience. I respect Monsieur. His tender melancholy impresses me. But is he an eminently moral and useful institution?

EVELYN JERROLD.



DEARLY-BOUGHT PLEASURE.

CHAPTER I.

A NEW YORK BELLE.

I WAS a sub-lieutenant in her Majesty's Navy, and was, as my profession and position proclaim, by custom a grumbler. Nevertheless even I did not feel disposed to find fault, when after many months' cruising among the West India Islands, her Majesty's ship 'Valentine' steered northwards, and we finally cast anchor off Staten Island. What our object was in paying our American cousins a visit, it is no part of my business to say. Indeed, I might safely declare we were all so delighted at the opportunity of getting ashore, and joining in the pleasures of New York dissipation, that we should none of us have cared had we been aware the captain was acting in direct defiance of orders. In that case we should have felt that if he chose to get into a mess he was bound to get out of it, and it could not possibly be any business of ours.

However, I was on duty the first day of our stay in port, and could only look wistfully landwards, that same land being a good deal too far off to be a very interesting object; yet at every spare moment I hung over the bulwarks, gazing at the passing steamers and shipping, and thinking that Paul Clifford was a very lucky fellow; for not only had he gone ashore on two or three days' leave, but also I was aware he had friends in New York, by whom he was sure of being warmly welcomed, and amongst whom his few days of leave would slip away very pleasantly. For me, though I so ar-

dently desired to get ashore, as I think a sailor always does long to land when he is in harbour, America was still a *terra incognita*, and therefore possessed all the proverbial charm of the unknown.

This made it the more trying and provoking for me that I did not get my liberty until Paul Clifford came back, which he did at the end of three days, looking very happy and handsome, though not at all pleased at his enforced return to 'this cursed old tub,' as he chose to call the ship, though in truth, she was a fine new armour-plated twin-screw steamer, built on the latest and most approved models, and had shown herself to be, on more than one occasion, both swift and handy.

I had now three days' leave ashore and as I was putting together a few things to take with me, or rather I suppose, preventing my man from putting them up—at least that was the light in which he viewed my help—Clifford came into my cabin and took one of my best cigars, which he forthwith stigmatised as beastly stuff.

'I say, Rainsford,' he continued, after this candid opinion on the merits of my tobacco, 'send this old duffer off. I have something to tell you.'

'But my things,' I objected—'he's packing them.'

'Oh, bother them! I'll pack them in five minutes, and it's a good half hour yet to the time the boat starts. I want to give you a letter of introduction to some people ashore, and I'll put you up

to how the land lies before you go.'

'I shall be glad to know some one ashore,' I replied. 'Are they nice people? Americans?—or what?'

'Americans all out,' answered Clifford; 'and that's why I want to talk to you. You see, their manners are different from ours, and therefore it is necessary you should not make any mistake in your intercourse with them, as might happen through ignorance.'

He ceased speaking for a minute, and handed me a letter sealed and directed. The monogram, the scent, the superfine envelope, were all very unlike Paul Clifford, who on the West Indian station had contracted some habits, that were certainly the reverse of neat and orderly. With a little surprise I looked at the address:

Miss Anastasia A. Cleve,
No. 80, Eightieth Street, &c.

'Why, it is to a young lady,' I exclaimed. 'Is this the introduction you promised me, Clifford?'

'Just so,' he answered, nodding. 'She is a great friend of mine, and will be very civil to you. I have never met the old people. I hear they are very wealthy; but Miss Anastasia says she never allows them to appear when she is receiving her beaux. She is of opinion that old people and young should move in different spheres, and not interfere with each other's amusements.'

Clifford ceased speaking, and smiled, as though he found his thoughts very amusing; while I, beginning to see how much his proffered help in packing meant, commenced recklessly throwing shirts and coats pell-mell into my portmanteau, in a manner that I was surprised to find afterwards, did not improve their appearance.

After a pause Clifford continued:

'She's an odd girl, and no mistake; though I suppose the customs of the country permit a good deal that seems strange to our eyes; you must remember that when with her, or you will perhaps excite her wrath against yourself; and by Jove, I wouldn't be in your shoes if you did. I saw her in a rage once, and it was prime fun to me; but if I had been the fellow who caught it I should not have liked it, though he did not seem to mind.' And Clifford leant back against the bulkhead and laughed immoderately.

I was rather out of patience by this time; for he had disturbed me in my operations, as it seemed to me, quite unnecessarily. I turned on him now rather angrily, and snapped out: 'Your recollections of Miss Anastasia A. Cleve's performances may be very amusing to you; but to me they can be neither interesting nor instructive, as long as you keep them to yourself. It was hardly worth while to come and interrupt me when I was in a hurry, if you had really nothing to tell me.'

'That's it, Rainsford,' laughed light-hearted Paul, as soon as he could speak. 'I like to put your back up, you get so stilted, use such long words and set phrases, and that ugly little face of yours lights up till one would not know it. Decidedly, my boy, you are never so near being handsome as when you are in a towering rage. But come, don't get too angry,' he continued, seeing I had turned my back on him, and was paying no further attention to him. 'I was just going to tell you all about Miss Anastasia,' and he went on mimicking my voice and accent; 'you will find the account both interesting and instructive. I met her first when she was staying with an aunt of hers in Brooklyn. I knew her aunt, Mrs. Marley, very



(Drawn by J. Lawrence.)

DEARLY BOUGHT PLEASURE.

"Taking Captain Porter's arm, she went with him towards the officers' cabin."

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"what?"

"Americans all out," answered Clifford; "and that's why I want to talk to you. You see, their manners are different from ours, and therefore it is necessary you should not make any mistake in your intercourse with them, as might happen through ignorance."

He ceased speaking for a minute, and handed me a large packet and directed the baggage. The coat, the opposite envelope, were all very unlike Paul Clifford, who on the West Indian station had remained some little time, and was certainly the reverse of neat and orderly. With a little surprise I looked at the address:

Miss Anastasia A. Cleve,
No. 30, Eighth Street, &c.

"Why, it is to a young lady," I exclaimed. "Is this the introduction you promised me, Clifford?"

"She is a friend of mine, and will be very glad to see me. I have never met the old people. I hear they are very wealthy; but Miss Anastasia says she never allows them to appear when she is receiving her beaux. She is of opinion that old people and young should move in different spheres, and not interfere with each other's amusements."

Clifford ceased speaking, and smiled, as though he found his thought very amusing; while I, beginning to see how much his proffered help in packing meant, commenced recklessly throwing shirts and coats pell-mell into my portmanteau, in a manner that I was surprised to find afterwards, did not improve their appearance.

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I was rather out of patience by this time; for he had disturbed me in my operations, as it seemed to me, with unnecessary freedom. I turned on him now rather angrily, and snapped out: "Your recollections of Miss Anastasia A. Cleve's performances may be very amusing to you; but to me they can be neither interesting nor instructive, as long as you keep them to yourself. It was hardly worth while to come and interrupt me when I was in a hurry, if you had really nothing to tell me."

"That's just what," laughed light-heartedly, as usual, as he could speak. "I like to put your back up, you get so stiffified, use such long words and set phrases, and that ugly little face of yours lights up till one would not know it. Decidedly, my boy, you are never so near being handsome as when you are in a towering rage. But come, don't get too angry," he continued, seeing I had turned my back on him, and was paying no further attention to him. "I was just going to tell you all about Miss Anastasia, and she went on mimicking my voice and accent; you will find the account both interesting and instructive. I met her first when she was staying with an aunt of hers in Brooklyn. I knew her aunt, Mrs. Marley, very



Drawn by J. Lawson.]

DEARLY BOUGHT PLEASURE.

'Taking Captain Porter's arm, she went with him towards the officers' cabin.'

well—had met her in Europe—and being rather taken with Miss Anastasia's appearance, I called there two or three times in about as many days, as soon as we were introduced to each other. One day, in the depth of winter, I was going down —th Street, when I saw her sitting in a sleigh, waiting outside one of the stores there. I stopped to speak to her, and found that she was waiting for her aunt, who was shopping inside. She was very glad of my company, as it promised her a little amusement. At any rate, as she candidly explained, it was more entertaining talking to me, than sitting staring at the coachman's back. The sleigh was a low one, so I seated myself on the side, and began talking to her, flattered in spite of her explanation, that she felt so glad to see me.

'Presently she uttered an exclamation, and looking hurriedly and intently at me, said, "Please, Mr. Clifford, let us talk very earnestly together for a few minutes. There is Jonathan Wilde on the other side of the street, and I don't want to speak to him just now. He came to call on us the other day in a state that he would himself describe as being slightly 'tired.' I don't intend to forget it in a hurry. He won't come near us perhaps, if he thinks we are busy talking."

'Now I knew Jonathan Wilde slightly,' explained Clifford, 'and I knew also that it was not an uncommon thing for him to be "tired" even at that early hour of the day. Fatigue, you understand, is a euphonious way of expressing a state of affairs, that must be at least undesirable in ladies' society. I watched the man as he approached, and was not very much surprised, knowing him as I did, to see him lift his hat, without any appearance of embarrassment, to

Miss Cleve, and then cross the street with the evident intention of speaking to her.

'But I confess to being astonished at his opening speech:

"I suppose you think, Miss Anastasia," he said, "that I ought to be ashamed of myself for my conduct the other day?"

'His manner was jaunty and unconcerned in the last degree—was itself an insolence, when one remembered to what he was referring; under all the powder that young ladies wear, one could see Miss Anastasia colouring with indignation.

"I guess you're about right, Mr. Wilde," she said, becoming more Yankee than usual in her anger. "You had ought to be ashamed of yourself. I expect you owe Mrs. Marley and myself an apology for calling in the state you were in the other day."

'Wilde laughed. "Oh, that was nothing," he said. "I was very quiet at your place; but it's true I was awfully 'tired' that day. Never was so much fatigued in my life. You should have seen me out sleighing with the Peters afterwards. I drove into one sleigh, and upset my own; and when we were picked up and brought into a house, I wanted to kiss the girls all round to make up with them. I was an awful case, I assure you."

'While he was speaking and laughing as if what he related was something to be proud of, I sat still on the side of the sleigh, and watched the gathering darkness and disgust on Miss Cleve's expressive face: when he stopped, she spoke again.

"I have nothing to do," she said, "with the manner in which you behaved to other people. I only wonder that you are not ashamed to acknowledge it, and that the Peters have anything to do with you afterwards. But

remember you owe me an apology, if you intend to keep on terms with me: I am not in joke, and this is no joking matter."

'Wilde laughed loudly, and his manner became still more insolent, as he replied: "A joke indeed! if you had had my head next day, you'd have found it no joking matter, I can tell you. Such a head as I had! Anything but a joke, I assure you."

'Up to this minute' Clifford continued, 'I had felt too furious to be amused: I was annoyed at the man's dastardly impertinence, and wished, more than once, to take the matter into my own hands, and chastise him well for his insolence; but now the frank manner in which he alluded to the state of his head next day, brought the absurd light of the scene so vividly before my mind, that I am sorry to say I went into yells of laughter, in which Miss Anastasia joined me, in her clear treble. She regained her composure quickly, however, and turned on Mr. Wilde sharply, giving me a hit at the same time, and one I must say I deserved.

"I don't laugh," she said, "because the matter appears to me any lighter than it did a few minutes ago, but because it is very hard to keep one's countenance, when a person who should never have stopped to listen to our discussion chooses to set the example of laughing, and shows that there may be to this, as to all things, a ludicrous side. To me it is a very serious matter, and knowing that I regard it so, I confidently expect your apology, Mr. Wilde."

"Then I suppose," replied Wilde, still laughing, "you think I acted as no gentleman would have done?"

"As you have so exactly expressed my sentiments, I will not deny them," she replied quietly.

"Dear me! how very particular young ladies are becoming," laughed Wilde insolently, raising his hat as he spoke. "It is rather hard to be punished so severely for a little fatigue. Pray tell Mrs. Marley how sorry I am not to be able to stop in your charming society until she comes out. Good-day."

'And hurrying away, Jonathan Wilde was soon out of sight. Then came my turn. "What made you remain there and laugh?" asked Miss Anastasia sharply of me. "You spoil the effect of all I said, by sitting there grinning, and I can tell you he deserved all he got richly, and more."

"I should have said you gave him enough," I answered: "I know I should have been sorry if half of that had been said to me by any lady. But he didn't seem to mind it: he is less of a gentleman than I took him to be."

"I think he had been drinking to-day," she answered shortly: "however here is my aunt, and we shall be going home now. Will you come with us?"

'An invitation I declined; and as I went on with my walk, I felt that I should be rather afraid of giving Miss Anastasia Cleve any occasion for pitching into me. However, we are and always have been good friends, and as I said before, she will be civil to you for my sake. Only don't you go falling in love with her.'

'I should think not,' I ejaculated solemnly. 'Fancy falling in love with a woman who could give it to a fellow in that fashion! Imagine what curtain lectures from such a tongue would be!'

'Imagine what a champion you would secure, were you fortunate enough to win her affection,' answered Clifford, looking almost sentimental.

'Hulloa!' I cried; 'is the wind

in that quarter? This introduction is more of a favour then, than I had dreamed.'

'Don't be an ass, Rainsford,' remonstrated my companion: 'the girl is a good one, though her manners are Young American; you will appreciate her when you know her. But you are more likely to make a fool of yourself about her than I am: so I warn you, as I am sure it would be useless. I don't believe she'd care for a Britisher, though she has no objection to them as beaux.'

I didn't say anything more. It would have been in vain to argue with Clifford about our respective susceptibility; and after all, if I did fall in and out of love more easily than he did, I affirmed that I got the most enjoyment out of life, and that susceptibility was the natural result of a more fervid and poetic temperament. At that minute, however, poetry occupied a very slight share of my thoughts, they being chiefly taken up with anxiety to get my things quickly ready for the boat, which I knew would soon start, and a kind of nervous apprehension of the young lady, to whom my thoughtful senior was so kindly anxious to introduce me.

I was not a bashful young man at all, and yet I am sure every one will agree with me, that a slight feeling of alarm, whenever I thought of what Clifford had related about her, was not unnatural; and no one will be surprised to hear, that though on starting I solemnly promised him I would present his letter immediately, yet it was late in the afternoon of the following day, when I knocked at the door of No. 80, Eightieth Street.

I had fondly hoped she might be out, but in this hope I was disappointed; and in a few minutes I was shown into a large and very

handsomely-furnished drawing-room, the only occupant of which was a young lady, who at the moment of my entrance was perusing Clifford's note, which I had sent up before by the servant.

'I am happy to make your acquaintance, Mr. Rainsford,' said this young lady, whom I at once guessed to be Miss Anastasia A. Cleve, rising and coming forward to shake hands. With the usual awkward stiffness of an Englishman, on being first introduced, I had merely bowed on entering, but she met me with the more friendly American custom of the shake-hands; then I felt at once as if this visit would not be the formidable affair I had anticipated. I saw immediately that Miss Cleve had pretensions as a belle: she was really pretty, and besides was dressed in the height of American fashion. She had a beautiful figure: American women—in fashionable life at least—generally contrive to have that; it is part of their art of dress so to disguise or improve a bad figure that it shall pass muster with the best. Her brown hair was coiled in a profusion of twists and plaits on the top of her head, being combed up straight from the back of the neck, one long thick curl alone escaping negligently behind, as though forgotten when the rest had been put up. Her eyes were large, dark, and very expressive; her mouth large, but well shaped, and showing very handsome teeth when she smiled; a feature so little characteristic in general of her nation, that in right of them alone, supposing them to be natural, she might claim the title of a beauty. Her complexion could not even be guessed at, so thickly was she powdered; a custom that I had already observed to be very pre-

valent, and that made me believe there might be some truth in the stories Clifford delighted to tell, and that I had always hitherto regarded as the creation of his fertile brain—and for a man who was not particularly imaginative in the sentimental or poetic line, he had a very fertile brain. He was accustomed to assert that when he had been stopping in the Southern States, he had seen suspicious traces of white powder on gentlemen's moustaches, and even the impression of a lady's cheek, very distinctly outlined in the same tell-tale dust, on the shoulder of a coat.

It might be so—as I looked at Miss Anastasia A. Cleve, I began to think such a betrayal was possible.

Her dress was of black velvet; man though I was, and not much up in the materials patronised by ladies for their dresses, I recognised that at a glance, and saw also that she wore round her neck ruffles of some white semi-transparent stuff that stood up high behind, but diminished in front to a mere edging between the black line of the dress and her skin. There was something very picturesque in the effect of the piled-up hair, long graceful neck, and old-fashioned ruff: sitting there in her black velvet, she seemed like the picture of a beauty of olden time. Even then that hidden fibre of my nature that vibrated so easily under the influence of beauty, and that Clifford stigmatised as susceptibility, must have been touched, though I was not aware that I regarded her as more than a lovely woman; one to whom our poet's words,

'She is a woman—therefore to be wooed;
She is a woman—therefore to be won,'

could be applied. I flattered myself, on the contrary, that I ad-

mired her as a beautiful work of art, and forgot to notice whether my pulses beat one throb quicker when her magnificent eyes smiled kindly on me. I did not even remember the little incident Clifford had related to me, until she herself recalled it to my remembrance.

'Mr. Clifford says you are a friend of his,' she observed, after a while. 'I know gentlemen tell each other everything about us poor women—didn't he mention to you how he was nearly getting into a scrape with me one day?—and aren't you afraid to come near me in consequence?'

'Not afraid,' I stammered hastily, too anxious to maintain my reputation for courage to care how much else I admitted.

'Not afraid,' she repeated, with a light laugh; 'something very like it though, I think. Well, I forgive you; for it must be unpleasant to a man to be assailed by an enemy on whom he cannot retaliate. At the same time I intend to make you do penance, for what I choose to consider the injustice of your thoughts. Are you engaged out this evening?'

I was not, but I hardly saw how that could interest her. I didn't tell her so however, but answered her question simply in the negative.

'That will do nicely,' she replied. 'No doubt you would have got some amusement for yourself if matters had turned out differently, and I had not wanted you; but it will be much better for you to come with me. I had intended to go to the opera to-night with one of my beaux; but I have just received a note from him to say that he has been telegraphed off to Chicago, and he hopes I will excuse him. I was wondering who I should substitute in his place when you called; and as

your friend tells me you know no one, I daresay you will be glad to be made of use.'

I was a young fellow at that time, had never been out in American society, and knew nothing of the manners of the fast portion of it—the so-called Young America. I was therefore almost bewildered at this sudden demand upon me. I did not quite lose my presence of mind however, but after an instant's hesitation, replied that I should be delighted to escort her. She noticed my temporary embarrassment—she was very quick—most American girls are, I think—and said, laughing:

'I expect you had some little spree on hand that you didn't like to acknowledge. You have lost it now, I guess; and it serves you right, for not saying at once that you had an engagement. I don't want to make a Britisher beau me about against his will, especially as I can get dozens of beaux, if I want them.'

'You mistake me,' I cried, anxious to explain that I had no objection to escorting her, and only that I had thought the request singular as coming from a young lady; but a timely recollection of the warning Clifford had given me, not to notice anything peculiar in American manners stopped me. Then I said instead, that the honour offered to a total stranger had overwhelmed me and caused me to feel for a minute confused. With this explanation she appeared satisfied. I found out afterwards that she prided herself on her unconventionality, and freedom from all trammels of old-fashioned custom. However she was not singular in this, as the extraordinary absence of restraint or surveillance forms one of the distinguishing features of a large section of American ladies' society.

It can well be understood that, flattered and elated at what I took to be the unusual attention and preference she showed me, I forgot all the awkwardness and slight scruples of English propriety that had at first alarmed me. I exerted myself to the utmost to make myself agreeable to her, and to prove that she had acted wisely with a view to amusement when she selected me as her companion. I have since thought that perhaps not much exertion was required on my part to make myself brilliant in such company. I was too much elated then to perceive that she was both the quickest and deepest of us two on most points at which the minds of men and women come into contact, I recognised the fact later on.

In professional matters, no doubt, and in knowledge of that darker side of life with which a thoughtless youth thinks it fine to profess an entire acquaintance, I should have been master of the conversation; but on every topic of general interest, whether in the history and politics of the world, or in that closer and more private sphere of the human heart, I learned to know in time that she was infinitely my superior. She had received one of those first-rate and thoroughgoing educations on which American women pride themselves. I am bound to admit that, though in spite of my self-satisfaction, I quickly perceived this, it did not detract in the least from my enjoyment of her society.

'You English are so surrounded by social humbugs,' she said, in the course of conversation. 'I wonder it never strikes your women that all the care, and watching, and talk that goes on across the water about what they may or what they may not do is a covert insult—as if they had neither power nor discretion to take

care of themselves. I guess we are none the worse for knowing how to keep out of harm's way, without any one to help us and look after us.'

I don't think I answered this speech. I was considering in my own mind whether, if all American girls were as pretty and graceful as this one, independence could have such a deteriorating effect upon women, as our old-world prejudices supposed; she seeing I was not inclined to argue out the matter with her, passed on rapidly to another subject.

I don't know how that evening passed away: I felt as if I was in some strange, new, enchanted world. I didn't believe that I was the least bit in love, though, no doubt, other people would have thought so. Miss Anastasia Cleve was so entirely different from my ideal woman, so totally unlike any girl with whom I had ever been in love before, that I should never have thought of anything of the kind in connection with her; and I told myself it was her singularity, the strange charm of her graceful independence, that attracted me, while it made softer feelings impossible. Notwithstanding such a conviction, I took an early opportunity of sounding her on the subject of her friendship with Paul Clifford. I flattered myself I had cut out our gay lieutenant; and I should have been sorry had I perceived by her manner that she took any deeper interest in him than she did in me, whom she had known for but a few hours.

She laughed when I asked her how long she had known Clifford, and whether she liked him much.

'He's not often in New York,' she said; 'but I guess when he is, he's about one of the best beaux I have; and so I like him, in spite of his little finicking British ideas. You'd never think what he had

the impertinence to ask me, not long after I first knew him. He wanted me not to go out of evenings with Harmonious Gayley, because he is just a little bit fast. I told Mr. Clifford to mind his business, and I'd mind mine. I knew quite enough about Harmonious and his goings-on to take care of myself.'

I tried to laugh; but for the first time that evening it occurred to me that English scruples might be good things, and that I should have agreed with Clifford in wishing the young lady before me to avoid the obnoxious man with the Yankee name; only I should have liked her to avoid a good many other men besides, Clifford himself amongst the number.

By this time the evening was well advanced, and we had gone to the opera. I had had a *tête-à-tête* tea with Miss Cleve, and had also had the satisfaction of hearing her tell the servant she was not at home to callers. At the minute when the conversation relating to Harmonious Gayley took place we were sitting very comfortably side by side in the Cleves' opera box, listening, or pretending to listen, to the luscious notes of that delightful singer, Pauline Lucca.

'I told the old people they were not to come to this box to-night, Mr. Rainsford,' said Miss Cleve, during a scene when the prima donna was not on the stage. 'I wanted to have you all to myself, that I might see whether you deserved Mr. Clifford's praises; and I can tell you you will have to look around pretty smart to come up to what he said.'

I suppose I looked puzzled, for with a laugh, she added, 'I forgot I must have shocked you, as I did your friend the first time I spoke of my father and mother that way. I mean no disrespect. The old people are real good to

me, and I'm just as fond of them as any of you English folks are of yours; but that's our way, and what would you have? At Rome do as Rome does.'

'Oh!' I exclaimed, 'I understand. I was puzzled. Forgive my insular stupidity and narrow-mindedness. On this new continent, I perceive, ideas are larger, and have a wider scope. In time I shall, with your help, learn to enter into them.'

'Don't be sarcastic,' she answered. 'We're not so young as to be unable to comprehend you; but we are in the full vigour and energy of our prime, while, on the other side, you are sinking into an effete old age. Never mind, we won't argue, or I should put your back up pretty quick, I reckon. Hush! here's Lucca.'

And thus we listened, and sparred, and made it up again; and in spite of constant disapproval of tones of thought and expression, or what would have been disapproval had I heard them from other lips, I became more and more enchanted by the sprightliness, grace, and social cleverness of my beautiful companion. I think this feeling was heightened by seeing opera-glasses from all sides levelled at our box, while my companion, with mischievous delight, whispered, 'That's Gayley, that dark man looking at us now; and that's Cameron; and see! there's Alcibiades Baker: such lots of my beaux here to-night, and they're all mad at seeing a stranger with me. Oh, isn't it fun!'

When the opera was over the young lady rose. 'Come,' she said, 'I must initiate you into our customs. You must take me to supper at D——'s. We shall meet such numbers of people I know; but I won't speak to them. I intend to devote myself to you,

and that will make them furious. Give me your arm, and come on. I don't want to be out too late to-night, as I am going to a ball to-morrow, and shall want all my energy for that.'

We went to D——'s, and had a very cosy little supper, Miss Cleve seeming vastly entertained by the angry glances cast at me when she coldly returned her beaux' salutations, and gave them no encouragement to come any nearer.

'It is a good thing you will not be staying here long,' she murmured, with a laughing glance at me. 'You would have a host of enemies in no time, and might even have the honour and glory of a duel thrust upon you. That Gayley knows how to handle a six-shooter, I can tell you.'

'Why, so can I, for that matter,' I answered, offering her my arm, as she rose to leave; and, passing out the centre of admiring and envious eyes, we drove to her home, where producing her latch-key in a business-like manner, my companion entered, after wishing me good-night in a frank, friendly manner, that left me utterly bewildered. She took the thing so entirely as a matter of course, and yet it was all as strange to me as the wildest conception of a dream. I rubbed my eyes to assure myself that I was really awake, and then drove back to my hotel, determined to manifest no astonishment before her when I called next day, but to question Clifford very closely as to the manners and customs of his American acquaintances when I saw him on board. I did not mean to tell him all that had occurred, because I could not help flattering myself I had been treated with very unusual and exceptional favour; but I might at least learn whether other young ladies treated their beaux in the same way, and

whether by so doing they laid themselves open to the same disagreeable talk, that would attend such an escapade at home.

I acknowledge that night my sleep was a land of dreams; of dreams equally blissful and bewildering.

CHAPTER II.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

I SHALL pass over the short visit I paid to Miss Anastasia next day with very little mention. It will be enough to say that I thought her even more charming than I had found her the night before, and it did enter into my head that he would be a lucky man who would win such a woman for his wife. I hoped Paul Clifford would not be so fortunate, nor the dark-looking Yankee, Harmonious Gayley, the man who she had told me could handle a six-shooter so well.

Very gladly I promised to come again and see her, if I got leave ashore whilst our ship remained off Staten Island; and then I hurried away, my fingers still tingling from the light touch of hers, and with a kind of undefined impression on my mind that something, I could not tell what, had happened to me since I had last been on board. Something had certainly happened—an event that might have confidently been predicted when an impressionable and sufficiently soft-hearted youth was thrown into close companionship with such a pretty and attractive woman as this American belle. I believe I had a faint glimmering myself of what might be the matter; but I did not think the wound had gone deep, and, after Clifford's chaff, I should certainly

have been ashamed to own that I had been wounded.

On my arrival on board, I was surprised to hear that the Captain wanted to speak to me in his cabin, whither I accordingly went. He was a man who did not often notice me, and I was unaware that I had lately done anything to attract his attention. My astonishment was greatly increased when, on my appearing before him, he desired me to consider myself under arrest, and confined to my cabin until further orders. He seemed exceedingly angry, and on his face bore some marks that looked as though he had been fighting.

I listened quietly to what he said, and then very humbly asked if I might know for what offence I was being thus punished.

'You ask me for what offence!' he cried, his passion rising as he spoke. 'I think the marks on my face attest the dastardly violence with which you assaulted your superior officer when he was unprepared, and unable to defend himself. When we return to Jamaica we will see what a court-martial will say to it. For the present, sir,' he added, cooling down a little, as he remembered what full power of revenge lay in his hands, 'you may keep yourself quiet in your cabin. We don't require your services, and I fancy her Majesty will soon dispense with them.'

'But sir,' I ventured to remonstrate, 'I have not seen you since I went ashore three days ago. I do not know to what you allude.'

'You have forgotten all about last night at S—— Theatre, I suppose?' he sneered. You don't remember striking me, because in trying to make way for a lady through the crowd I accidentally pushed against you. Your memory is short, Mr. Rainsford.'

'I was not at S—— Theatre last night,' I answered. 'I was at the opera with—with——' And here I stopped, stammering. 'I could not tell the young lady's name: I might get her talked about, and make matters disagreeable for her—might give her cause, in fact, to repent her good-nature to me.'

'Ah!' ejaculated Captain Porter, 'it seems you cannot mention the name of your companion very easily: that might have been a clever alibi, had you been able to finish your story, and prove it. But there is no necessity for you to seek further: I saw you.'

The sneering unbelief of his tone stung me, and I answered hotly: 'What I say is true; I swear it is true.'

'Prove it,' replied the Captain. 'It is easy to prove a truth of that kind; bring forward your companion.'

'I can't prove it,' I muttered, more to myself than to him. It would be too cruel, I thought, to bring forward that young bright girl as my witness: she had been foolish and rash in gratifying her taste for pleasure and her liking for my society without regarding consequences. At all hazards I must bear my fate alone, and not drag her into difficulties to save myself.

'Ah! I thought you couldn't,' sneered Captain Porter: 'it would have been odd indeed if you could; as though there was not much light were we stood, I caught a glimpse of you when you turned to strike me, that enabled me to recognise you. Perhaps you didn't know you were attacking your Captain, but the lesson you will get now will leave you no opportunity of so erring again. Now you may go.'

I had nothing more to say, so I turned and left him; as I went

to my room, I had a few hurried words with Clifford, who met me on my way.

'What in heaven's name have you been about now? Old Porter is half frantic, and declares you attacked him in the most violent manner last night, coming out of the theatre. If all is true that he says, you must have been most alarmingly 'tired,' as Miss Cleve's friend used to say, and that's not like you; but to strike the Captain! you must have been mad!'

Clifford's bright face clouded over as he said this, and he looked at me anxiously. He knew the probable consequences of the court-martial with which I was threatened, and though he often laughed at me, and made fun of my sentimentalities as he thought them, I believe he entertained a very real and true friendship for me.

'I should have been mad indeed, Cliff, if it was true, I answered: 'but it isn't. I wasn't at S—— Theatre last night.'

Clifford's face brightened. 'Oh! then of course you had some one with you; you can easily prove you were not in the row, I suppose?'

'I don't think I can,' I answered sadly. 'Look here, old fellow, I want to think this over; it has come on me so suddenly I don't know what to do. I am going to my cabin now, as that old Tartar has ordered me to do; could you manage to look in at me any time this evening?—and then I'll tell you all I think I can tell.'

So saying, I left him, and he remained looking after me puzzled no doubt by my ambiguous parting words. I meanwhile in my solitude sat down to think. Outside my door, overhead on the deck, all around, I could hear the quick steps, the loud cheery voices of my comrades, and a glimpse of the merry spring sunshine shot in

through my port-hole, lighting up all the little niceties with which I had adorned my cabin, and in which I was accustomed to take so much pride. But now I felt low and sad enough, and the gleam of sunshine and busy sounds from the outside world only made my loneliness more apparent. To me the forthcoming court-martial meant utter ruin, unless I should be fortunate enough to prove my innocence. I had nothing but my profession to depend on for a living, being poorer even than the younger son of a younger son; that is to say, I had been left the only son of a widowed mother, at the age of eight years, and had been placed in the navy by an old friend of my father's, who had interest to help me so far, and having done so, had lost sight of me, imagining that he had done all that could be required or expected of him. I knew on what slender means my mother struggled through life; and though wild by nature, as I think most young men are, there was a restraining influence in every thought of her that had kept me straight, and even guarded me against running into debt—though the scanty allowance with which she was able to supplement my pay made keeping out of debt more of a virtue at times than perhaps strangers would have credited me with. But there is a wonderful power in a mother's love, rightly shared and valued by the child, though now it added bitterness to the sting that lay in the thought of what was before me. I knew I had so little power of turning to any other profession, should I be forced out of this one, which I understood, and in which I took a keen pleasure: my life at sea, with its regular routine and its well-defined duties, had unfitted me for any other occupation—in which I don't think I was an exception

to the general run of naval men, who, as a rule, do not succeed, if forced by circumstances to change their line of life.

And then as I sat and thought, the idea grew upon me that it was hard I should bear all this to save from gossip a foolish girl who had got into mischief of her own seeking, of whom I knew hardly anything, and who probably would not care one straw if she knew the trouble into which her escapade had brought me. Yet if I could draw her name in, it seemed to me a cowardly thing to shelter myself behind her, as it were; to drag her folly into notice under the eyes of the captain; to summon her as my witness in fact, and let her bear the brunt of such a disagreeable position. No, on that point, to me there was but one path open; mistaken though I was, and bitter against her as the cause of all this, no idea of saving myself by exposing her crossed my mind.

I was very hard upon her—and on all women too, for that matter—as I sat alone thinking. If she had only let me alone all would have been well: if women had only let men alone, from the commencement of the world until now, how different everything would have been. And yet she was so pretty, so sweet in her looks, so graceful in her ways; I should have liked her to feel sorry for me. I should have forgiven her for not letting me alone, if I could have had the pleasure without the pain—the rose without the thorns; for this, I am almost ashamed to confess, was the real meaning of my meditations—as I daresay it is of a great many more musings in the world, when anything goes wrong with those who muse.

In the meanwhile, Clifford, in spite of his sorrow for me, did not feel inclined to forego his leave

ashore, and a little while after parting from me he left the ship, as I learned afterwards, at the time I imagined him still on board, and lived in hopes of seeing him during the evening, though I had decided I could tell him nothing that would be of any use to me. But time passed on, and he did not arrive, a negligence on his part that I attributed to his either being occupied by duty, or to our spiteful old Captain having forbidden him to come near me.

The fact of the matter was, that when I was expecting him down to see me, he was sitting in Miss Cleve's drawing-room, amusing himself so well that he had doubtless forgotten my existence, until she suddenly asked after me.

'Poor fellow!' answered Clifford; 'then he did deliver my note, after all. I was afraid I had frightened him too much about you, and that he would not call.'

'He has more courage than you think,' she replied. 'He did come to see me, and I guess he'll come again next time he is ashore.'

'Don't count on that,' said Clifford sadly. 'Poor fellow! I doubt he'll be on shore in New York again for many a long day. He's got himself into the most confounded mess.'

'Why, what has he done?' Miss Anastasia asked eagerly. 'He seemed all right when he was here this morning.'

'I don't like telling tales out of school,' replied Clifford, 'and I am afraid this looks badly for him. He's a very well-behaved young fellow in general, but on this occasion he must have been drinking, or he could never have acted so madly. He was at S—— Theatre last night, and coming out he came in collision with our Captain in some way, it appears, and struck him. Of course he'll be court-

martialled, and dismissed the service.'

'But that's impossible and untrue, whoever told you the story,' cried Miss Cleve. 'When is this supposed to have occurred?'

'Between ten and eleven o'clock yesterday evening,' answered Clifford, staring at her in great astonishment.

'Oh! then it's all right,' said the young lady, laughing. 'I am so glad. But I guess your friend can clear himself. Didn't he say he wasn't there?'

'He certainly did, but he couldn't prove it. He must have proof.'

'He couldn't prove it,' she repeated thoughtfully. 'That is most extraordinary. Couldn't he remember where he was at that hour last night?'

'No doubt he could, but he did not seem willing to say, and therefore I must acknowledge I was inclined to believe him guilty.'

Miss Anastasia A. Cleve looked thoughtful, and was silent for a minute; then her face cleared, like the passing of a cloud off a beautiful landscape, and she broke into a merry laugh. 'What queer people you Britishers are, to be sure,' she said. 'I calculate I know all about your friend, now. If he can't prove where he was last night, I can. I took him to the opera, and afterwards we went to supper at D——'s. I wasn't home till twelve. That proves his alibi, doesn't it? I suppose he thought it would be bad for me if he told, so he preferred to keep quiet and be court-martialled. Too Quixotic by half, and so I shall tell him; but he's a good boy to have thought of me, all the same. What do you recommend me to do now, Mr. Clifford, to set this right?'

'I am so glad,' said Clifford, 'that you can clear the matter up. I understand Rainsford's scruples,

and admire him for them, though I confess I am inclined to think them youthful and far-fetched, particularly where they are not needed. But now the best thing you can do is to come on board with me to-morrow, and ask to see Captain Porter. I know he will be there between eleven and twelve; and if you are not too tired to be up at that hour, after the ball you are going to to-night, it would get poor Rainsford out of durance all the quicker, and might perhaps save your having to be called as a witness at another time.'

'I'll be ready,' answered Miss Cleve, 'though I guess I shall find it hard work to be up so early. You will call for me at half-past ten? And now I must leave you to get ready for the ball. Are you coming? I have a beau to take me, but there will be room in the carriage for you too, and I can bring you with me: the young ladies who give it are friends of mine.'

Thus invited, and his mind relieved on my account, Clifford hurried off to his hotel to dress—he had come ashore for a day or two—and about the same time, I suppose, I rendered dull and stupid by bewilderment and sorrow, fell into a heavy sleep, lying on my back where I had thrown myself on first entering my cabin. But even sleep will not bring oblivion to a great trouble. There is an uneasy, oppressing consciousness for ever on the mind, a weight that might be a nightmare by its oppressive effects, but that it is purely a mental and not a physical sensation—a nightmare of the mind, in fact. And thus all through that long, dark night, in my deepest slumbers, I was dimly conscious that something was wrong with me, and I awoke in the morning, miserable, weary, and unrefreshed, as indeed was

not wonderful, considering I had been lying in my clothes all night. I was vexed with myself for having done so; but as I went through my dressing operations the dreadful, hopeless feeling that had so weighed me down passed off a little, and the hopefulness of youth asserted itself. I began to think that being so entirely innocent, it was quite impossible I could be condemned as guilty—a very futile mode of reasoning, but one that has, I fancy, comforted older heads than mine in even more desperate straits than this. Yet I was totally unconscious of the near approach of my deliverance, and equally ignorant of the quarter from whence it was to come.

'A lady wishes to speak with you, Captain Porter,' said Lieutenant Clifford, entering the Captain's cabin a little later on in the day. 'She says she comes on business. Shall I show her in?'

'A lady! I have no business with ladies,' answered Captain Porter. We called him 'Old Porter,' though he was not more than forty, and was a young-looking man for his age. He was unmarried, and was not supposed to be partial to ladies' society, though he asserted he had been escorting one when he received the blow, that he supposed had been dealt by me, and for inflicting which I was under arrest. 'I can't think what she can want,' continued the Captain nervously. 'However, I suppose you'll have to show her in. What is she like, Mr. Clifford?'

'She's young and very handsome, sir,' answered Cliff, unable to repress a smile, as he saw our bashful Captain pass his hand hurriedly over his hair, to assure himself that it was all right, and then composing his features into an expression that was meant to be dignified, but that Paul assured

me afterwards was intensely nervous and uneasy, ordered her to admitted.

I should have liked to be present at that scene, and have watched Miss Cleve's graceful entrance, and contrasted her calm self-possession, under such very unusual circumstances, with our Captain's flurried, troubled manner, in a place where he certainly was 'monarch of all he surveyed.'

'Mr. Clifford, pray remain,' said the young lady on entering; 'you may be wanted,' and Captain Porter, who had opened his mouth to tell Clifford to leave, shut it again in silence. 'Allow me to introduce myself as Miss Anastasia A. Cleve, Captain Porter,' she continued; 'I am happy to make your acquaintance.'

Captain Porter bowed, looked happy, placed a chair for Miss Cleve, and then remained silent.

She resumed, after a pause, 'I guess you're wondering what brought me here; and I don't suppose a British lady would have done it, or indeed placed herself in a position that would have required her to do it.' Here she laughed a light amused laugh as the absurd aspect of the situation struck her, and then continued: 'I'm a free and independent American, however, and I ain't ashamed of it; so you must excuse anything you think strange in this business: it is about business I have come to speak to you, as Mr. Clifford, I suppose, told you?'

Again Captain Porter bowed without speaking; his eyes were fixed on her intently, but Clifford said he seemed as if he had lost his tongue, or had been turned into stone by this beautiful Medusa. At any rate, our lieutenant said Captain Porter never appeared so awkward and ill at ease in all his life as then; and

I think his gay and polished junior liked seeing the awkward figure his captain presented.

After a pause, during which Miss Cleve looked as if she expected Captain Porter to make some observation, she continued: 'I suppose I had better not detain you, Captain; so I will tell you my business at once. 'You have a young officer on board, Mr. Rainsford. I hear that you are under the impression you met him at S—— Theatre the night before last, and that you are about to bring his supposed misconduct before a court-martial. I guess, Captain, you have made a mistake; he was with me at the Opera in ——th Street that night, and afterwards at supper at D——'s, where he was seen by a great many friends of mine, who can prove what I say.'

Captain Porter stared at her for a minute, and then blurted out bluntly: 'How do I know whether I can believe your word, or that of your friends? You may be——.'

He stopped abruptly; there was something about the girl that checked insolence, and our Captain broke off so suddenly as almost to choke himself, and to cause him to get red in the face.

'As to who I am, and whether my word or that of my friends is to be believed, you can ascertain those matters for yourself: there is my card, with my name and address. Mr. Rainsford was introduced to me by Mr. Clifford, whom I have known now for some time. It was convenient to me that I should have him for my beau that evening; and I saw that though he was a Britisher he was a gentleman, so I availed myself of his escort. Make all inquiries you deem needful about me, and then if you think it necessary, apply to me for further

confirmation of what I assert. But I beg you, look well into the matter before you proceed against Mr. Rainsford, for I assure you he is innocent of having been concerned in the affair in which you were engaged.'

'But I was sure I saw his face,' urged Porter. 'It was dark, and I might have been mistaken, but I think I wasn't. You want to get the young man off: you're engaged to him no doubt, or you wouldn't have been going about with him at night like that; and of course you don't mind what you say to get him clear.'

Miss Cleve's eyes flashed. 'I have told you I hardly know Mr. Rainsford,' she said clearly. 'I went with him because it suited me, and I have a right to choose my own beaux. Cannot your narrow-minded British ideas let you see, that even if I never met him again, I was bound in justice to get him out of the scrape I had got him into? But I will wish you good morning, Captain Porter. I have had a good deal to do with gentlemen since I went into society, and I live up to all the independent customs of my country, but I have never met a man to insult me with suspicion until I made your acquaintance. I only pass over your conduct without demanding an apology, because I guess a Britisher knows no better.'

'Stay,' cried Captain Porter, suddenly springing from his chair as she turned to go, and flushing all over his bronzed countenance. 'I do believe you; and if you will take my arm I will bring you to his cabin that you may release the prisoner yourself. Remember, I believe you,' he repeated emphatically; and he added, under his breath, 'even if I didn't I wouldn't have dared to say so.'

Miss Cleve smiled graciously, and taking Captain Porter's arm, went with him towards the officers' cabins, Clifford following, immensely amused at the turn matters had taken, and wondering not a little at the Captain's politeness.

'There's something in beauty after all,' he mused, 'even if it is only skin deep. Those eyes of hers convinced old Porter, I'll be bound, more than the strongest oath I could have sworn.'

I was sitting in a dejected attitude all alone in my cabin, and never heard footsteps approaching, so buried was I in bitter thought: for the transient elation of spirits, as I thought of my own innocence, had passed away, and left me in the deepest blues. Suddenly the door was thrown open, and looking up with a start, I met Miss Anastasia's eyes smiling down on me as she stood beside Captain Porter, who looked extremely red and hot; while over her shoulder appeared Clifford's face, radiant with amusement, and evidently with difficulty suppressing his usual hearty laugh.

Mechanically I sprang to my feet, and remained waiting to hear the meaning of this singular visit. To my sore heart there seemed something very cruel in Miss Cleve's coming thus to look at my misfortunes, and yet her face did not look cruel.

It was the Captain who spoke first, in a harsh, grating voice. 'This young lady has kindly come here to see me and explain matters, Mr. Rainsford. She tells me I was mistaken in supposing you to be the person who struck me the other night.'

'And you believe me?' questioned Miss Anastasia, looking at him as he finished speaking. Her beautiful eyes were turned full

on his face, and he flushed a deep dull red under their gaze as raising his slowly to meet them, he said in a low voice, as though unable to help himself, 'I believe it, because you told me it.'

She gave him a smile that ought to have rewarded him, though he looked as if he could have bitten his tongue out for his folly; then turning to me, she said: 'Captain Porter has rewarded me for my trouble by empowering me to release you. I guess I feel like Queen Victoria of England setting free a prisoner. It's all right now, Mr. Rainsford; let's shake hands on it.'

She held out her hand as she spoke, and I took it, saying, 'If you are Victoria of England setting free a captive, we will observe the ceremonial;' and then I raised her hand to my lips and kissed it respectfully, as if it had been that of the Queen to all outward appearance, but feeling

inwardly a sudden passion of love and gratitude for the effort she had made to save me from the blank and hopeless future that had menaced me.

Captain Porter scowled darkly at me as I released her hand, but she laughed gaily. 'I guess, Mr. Rainsford,' she said, 'Britisher though you are, you owe more duty to me than to your queen now—or you think you do, which is pretty much the same thing.' Then saying 'Good-bye' with her pretty smile, and a look of her beautiful eyes, for being doomed to the infliction of Captain Porter's escort, she was taken away by him, he insisting on accompanying her back to town, while Clifford sitting down on my seachest, relieved his pent-up feelings by hearty laughter.

'I do believe old Porter's caught at last,' he said: 'and by an American. What prime fun!'

But I said nothing, for I didn't think it fun at all.



CELEBRATED FAILURES.

THE pleasant amusement of being present on the occasion of the first representation of a new play, is becoming in England more and more fashionable. We have not quite arrived at the Parisian pitch of excitement, necessitating an introduction to a theatrical manager, in order to obtain the privilege of putting one's name down to draw lots for a stall; but, as it is, the interest with us is genuine and healthy. When a new play is announced at the Prince of Wales's, the Lyceum, the Olympic, the Globe, the Court, or the Vaudeville, we may be pretty sure that those who have influence in the theatre are requested by their friends to secure seats on the box-plan some days before the box-office is open: and though at present we do not hear wonderful stories of stalls sold by auction, or boxes at a fabulous premium, it is quite certain that on any celebrated occasion the demand for seats far exceeds the possible supply. This can be accounted for in several ways. Without in any way discussing the merits of the question of the degradation or otherwise of the English drama, it is quite certain that the amusement of play-going is, generally, more popular than it was—say twenty years ago. More theatres exist, more plays are performed; the theatrical profession is considerably enlarged, and—perhaps the truest test of the popularity of the play—the newspapers pay more attention to the drama, as one of the branches of the fine arts, than has ever before been the case. Again, as a rule, the most noteworthy 'first nights' occur on a Saturday evening, when the week's work is for the most part done, and theatre-

going—particularly in the winter-time—is the fashion. Sunday, in literary and artistic society, is mainly devoted to the discussion of the success or failure of last night's new play. Now I do not pretend to call myself an old playgoer; but for the last fifteen years I think I have been one among the constant and regular attendants at the theatre. Since 1859, I have not missed many important first nights. Since 1864, I don't suppose a play has been produced in London which I have not seen. I am, consequently, in a position to speak on a subject which must have astonished those who look back with any curiosity on the statistics and history of the English stage. It must be a matter of surprise to many, that the first-night's failures are so ludicrously disproportionate to what are euphemistically called the first night's successes. Old playgoers tell us that it was no uncommon thing many years ago to see a play or farce absolutely and unequivocally damned.

It was no novelty, no surprise. But now-a-days, if a hiss is heard in a theatre, we begin rummaging in the back volumes of our memory to recall the time when such a thing occurred before. About five times in my whole theatrical experience I have seen plays almost unanimously condemned by audiences; but in almost all these cases, the plays were so outrageously bad, that they became ludicrous rather than obnoxious. They were chaffed, not hissed off the stage. I have positively never seen an audience lose its temper, and hiss because its temper was tried, and its common sense outraged. They have hissed by fits

and starts because they were bored, because they were weary, because they had lost their amusement, because they were sick of the whole thing. They have whistled, and joked, and talked, and cat-called, when it was impossible to understand the merest outline of the story, or for the actors to make headway against these difficulties; but I have never seen an audience indignant on high moral or artistic grounds. I have seen, it is true, curious things at the play. Once upon a time an unfortunate lady—she really appeared to be a very modest and inoffensive lady—who appeared in the stalls of the Strand Theatre in a dress which had been ill-cut by her dress-maker, and was sadly *decolletée*, was literally hissed and hooted out of the place. The moral audience would not have her at any price. They pointed at her, they groaned at her, they levelled their sarcasms at her unfortunate head; until at last a shawl was flung across the offending shoulders, and the culprit was hurried out of the house, half dead with shame and annoyance. But such a terrible retribution as this has never fallen upon those who deserved it far more on the stage; upon those whose punishment—bitter no doubt to the recipients—would have redounded to the credit of the castigators, and would have done inestimable good to the stage. It would be affectation to deny that the hearty and honest expression of disgust and contempt, by a full audience, would never have been beneficial, or has never been deserved. I have seen theatres opened palpably for the sake of pandering to the lowest forms of vice and reckless depravity. I have seen plays and burlesques intrusted to those who are as unable to understand the lines which they acquire by rote, like parrots, as they would be to read

their parts, or write their own names. I have heard songs sung by women with no voices; lines spoken by women of no intelligence; dances executed by women of no agility; choruses entrusted to women with no ear. Entertainment and amusement have been out of the question. It has been merely a silly show of legs and spangles; and yet the audience has uttered not onesyllable of reproach. Poor silly things have toddled on in their tight boots and faultless fleshings; have gaped, and stared, and looked inexpressibly idiotic; and have then toddled off again to the photographer, to be arranged on an easy couch as one of the 'popular actresses of the day.' Grammar has been sacrificed, the aspirate has been outraged, tune has been crushed, sense has been mangled; but the audience has done no more than stare aghast at the astounding impertinence of the exhibition. I have seen tipsy women on the stage; but the kindly audience has not ventured on a remonstrance. I have seen impertinent women in the front row of the nobodies, winking at their friends in the stalls, or talking to their friends in the side boxes, and still the audience has remained speechless and silent. Art has been degraded, decency taunted, and common respect defied, and yet an English audience has not signified its displeasure by a movement. In the old days, I verily believe that such unwarrantable insults as are now constantly permitted to go unpunished would not have been tolerated. An audience, at that time, without being snappish, sour, or cruel, upheld the dignity of its judicial position; and if anyone dared to overstep the limits of decency and respect, it was pretty certain that that rash person would hear of it again. They may have been ignorant, or

prejudiced, or bigoted, those playgoers of the old days; but they would not tolerate the public exhibition of tipsy women, or impertinent actors; and fairly represented, with admirable vigour, any attempt to turn the stage into a mart for the exhibition of cast-off Chloes, or budding Berenices. I make no attempt to prove here that our stage is lower, from a moral stand-point, than that of any other European capital. Quite the contrary. I believe the stage of no other country can boast, amongst its professors, such modesty, such domesticity, such sound practical virtues, such cheerful industry; or so many who, from their worth and excellence, are so heartily welcomed by society. But there are specks on the sun. There are clouds sometimes flitting across the most azure firmament. Compare, for instance, the Millie, and Tottie, and Lottie, of the English stage, with the Finette or Mimi of the French. The one, having no artistic temperament, cannot even pretend to be what she is not; the other, though merely put forward as an attraction, in high boots and silk fleshings, is still a part of the picture, is still something of an artist, is graceful even in her undress, is never a pitiful exhibition.

The verdict of a first-night audience is almost invariably correct. Though no public expression of opinion is given, it is well understood at the time if a play is likely to succeed or to fail. Any familiar first-nighter can tell to an absolute certainty if there is money or not in a new play. To those experienced in such matters, to those accustomed to study the requirements and eccentricities of audiences, this becomes as easy as the difficult acquirement of tea or wine tasting. During the last ten years, I have only on one occasion known the verdict of a first-night

audience completely reversed, and that was in the matter of a melodrama by Mr. Burnand, at the Queen's Theatre, which was virtually a failure when first represented; but succeeded afterwards remarkably well. Take the impressions of any independent critic, registered after the first performance of a play, and—however much cavil, however much dispute, however much back-biting, however much snarling—his decision, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, will prove correct; not because the public follows one criticism, or one opinion, but because the practised eye is as valuable in these matters as is the palate of a tea or wine taster. *Experientia docet.*

It is not very difficult, after all, to detect the leading reasons for the hesitation of the public in pronouncing more definitely on a *fiasco*; or for refusing to punish, by a terrible whirlwind of contempt, those eccentricities, as they are called, which lower the character of the stage, and bring the dramatic art into such unfortunate contempt. After full and ample reflection, I believe that the altered position of the 'pit' of the theatre is the chief cause of the difficulty we all experience. In the days when the pit ran right up to the orchestra—when the paying part of the house was the most prominent—managers, actors, and actresses were compelled to mind their 'p's' and 'q's.' The pit was then a power. At present it is all but impotent. In those days, friends of a speculative managerial venture, critics, and all the non-paying public, were in the boxes. The pit contained all who had paid their money; and criticised, applauded, hissed, or went to sleep, actuated by a true and artistic impulse. No playgoer has been worse treated by the modern manager and the modern thea-

trical architect than the humble individual who pays his two shillings to the pit. Of all playgoers, he is the most constant, the most enthusiastic, the most fair. He is, on the whole, the best friend both of the manager and the artist. But no constant playgoer has been so neglected. He is driven back, worsted, and put to shame. He is hustled away under the dress circle; in many theatres he is banished altogether from the floor of the house. When a play succeeds, he is forced more and more back into the streets by the substitution of extra rows of stalls. His voice, so genuine in its applause, and so crushing in its condemnation, is comparatively hushed, and the jury, or stalls of a theatre, are filled with friends of this one, and friends of that, who are too genteel to applaud, and, for the most part, too sycophantic to hiss. I have recently attended a performance, which I take to be the most sad in its tone and its influence which has distressed the stage for many years. I allude to the performance of an opera-bouffe, called 'Vert-Vert.' It was reprehensible, because it was started under conditions which must have been recognised as fatal by the most unprejudiced audience that London can produce. To produce an opera successfully, or at least with such an amount of success as would cause it to be tolerated in this London of ours, we require at least three things—fair acting, fair singing, and a tolerable orchestra. In this instance, on the first night the artists could not act, the singers could not sing, the musicians could not play. The painful exhibition was not caused by nervousness, fright, or any accident. It was caused by downright incompetence. When the orchestra was found to be hideously out of tune, when the

conductor had clearly lost his head, and did not know what piece to play next; when the singing was so ludicrous and painful, that the audience stopped its ears in horror; when some dancers had been introduced—so vulgar that they could not be tolerated, the curtain was pulled down at a quarter past midnight, and the performance came to an end. It was not stopped, as it would have been stopped in the old days, because the whole thing was an impertinence; it was not stopped because a silly array of pretty nobodies had been engaged, or perhaps had paid to appear upon an English stage, fortified with pet names, and ignorant of the merest rudiments of their art; it was not stopped because gentlemen coolly proposed to sing with no voices; because the orchestra and singers were constantly at fault; because the whole thing was unprepared, ill-rehearsed, and slip-slop; because the opera constantly broke down; or because the only elements of success were contained in scenery, dresses, and lime-light; but because the audience was weary of such wretched nonsense, and left the performers comparatively to an empty theatre. Why was this? Because the theatre in which the exhibition took place has no pit; because the whole floor of the theatre is filled with stalls; and because, in the stalls there is no spirit, no earnestness, and no true devotion to dramatic art. The stalls, as a rule, treat these performances as a joke. They are not serious about such failures; they do not see that the example thus set is lamentable; that the precedent is dangerous; and that, once let such faults go unpunished, they will be repeated with fourfold strength and daring. It is a painful thing to correct a favourite child; but to neglect to

do so is no kindness. The child is urged by some fiendish and apparently irresistible impulse to touch that which it was forbidden to approach. It dares you. It looks out of the corner of its eye, and gets nearer and nearer the forbidden object. If you once give in you are lost. The work of correction will be ten times more difficult next day. It is just the same with these unworthy performances. Once let them pass without indignant comment, and they will be repeated with renewed disaster. No pit would have tolerated 'Vert-Vert,' or would have refused to visit it with the severest castigation. This first performance died a lingering death. It was poisoned by slow degrees; it was chaffed until it could stand it no longer. It was not stabbed quickly and suddenly to the heart. All well-wishers to the stage must have wished for a pit at the St. James's Theatre on the evening of 2nd May, 1874, instead of stalls half filled with obvious friends of the ladies on the stage, and half occupied by those who think it far too great a bore to express an opinion one way or another. I consider the failure of 'Vert-Vert' the most complete I ever saw, as was the performance the most deplorable. The feeling in the house was to laugh at it, rather than condemn it; and I must own I wonder at such forbearance from those who had paid eight shillings and six-pence for a stall, or four guineas for a private box. An attempt has been made to show that the first-night failure of 'Vert-Vert' was a mistake, and that the opera has pleased subsequent audiences. I have heard many opinions on it since, and I wish I could say that any of them were complimentary.

Next to this failure in point of decision was the failure of 'Ecarté'

at the Globe Theatre, a play which was acted on a Saturday night, and was never repeated. But it was acted out to the end. It was chaffed rather than condemned. The plot was incomprehensible; the artists inefficient. One actress so lost her head, that she addressed the gallery, saying, 'When you've done laughing, I'll go on.' But there was no indignant remonstrance on the part of the audience; no protest against a play unworthy of the attention of an intelligent audience. It might have been so had the pit occupied its old place, instead of being thrust back by the stalls—the fashionable, well-dressed, unenthusiastic, indifferent stalls—interested in actor, manager, actress, or author, chuckling over the conversation which would spring out of such a *fiasco*, but unconcerned on the subject—the grave subject—of offering such a play, not as a joke at amateur theatricals, but as a serious contribution to dramatic art. The failure of a drama called 'Fair France,' at the Queen's Theatre the other evening—a drama written by a Mr. West Digges—was very complete, as it turned out, for it only lasted three nights, and the scene in the theatre was very distressing towards the end; but in that case the sting of the condemnation was justly withheld. This was no case of a company of unknown girls with pretty pseudonyms; no speculation supported by the contributions of those who were anxious to pay a premium for their brief apprenticeship as actresses; no result of advertisements, in which prominent attention was drawn to the fact that 'no previous knowledge of the stage was requisite.' It was the failure of a play well conceived; very fair, indeed, at the commencement; entrusted to artists of the stamp of Mr. Creswick, Miss Fur-

tado, and others; but hopeless, because the story failed to interest, because it was clumsily worked out, and because a time came when the audience refused to listen any longer, and prepared itself vigorously for a set course of ridicule. No one can say that such a verdict was undeserved, or that the play, according to any known laws, could have hoped to succeed; but here there was no reason for the expression of any indignation. Its author had made a mistake, and there was an end of it. To the same class belong such failures as 'The Nightingale,' at the Adelphi, and both 'Tame Cats,' and 'How She Loves Him,' at the Prince of Wales Theatre—all memorable evenings, and as memorable failures. Occasionally, but very rarely, a play utterly fails from having been unfortunately placed, and from being intrusted to artists who, though clever, misunderstand, or fail to appreciate the work given to them. Such a failure, unquestionably, would have been 'Society,' by Mr. T. W. Robertson, had it been accepted in the first instance by Mr. Buckstone, at the Haymarket, who refused to comply with the earnest and pathetic appeals of the author. Such failures were 'Oriana,' by Mr. Albery, at the Globe, and 'The White Pilgrim,' by Mr. Herman Merivale, at the Court Theatre. Both were works of the highest art, and their failure was deplored by every one with any artistic temperament. 'Oriana' was more than a beautiful poem. It was dramatic, and well suited to stage representation. Aided by scenery, bold effects, good musicians, a band, and an orchestra, it would have held the town. But still, notwithstanding its intrinsic merits, its poetry, and its admirable music by Mr. F. Clay, it failed as dismally as it could fail. It failed because the

poetry was not properly spoken, and the music was not properly sung. It failed because it was given to the wrong theatre and the wrong company. Sad, also, for the stage, very sad, indeed, was the failure of the 'White Pilgrim,' a drama which must have succeeded, had the slightest discrimination been exercised in selecting a home for it. For here we had more than poetry. We had interest of story; and such stage workmanship or craft as is very rare indeed in these days. I shall ever cease to regret that 'White Pilgrim,' which was as utterly thrown away as would be plover's eggs on a pot-boy, or a sweetbread on a sweep. It was a cruel task to sit out that excellent play, and to feel that it must go, that there was no saving it, do what one could.

Of the failures of plays owing to inordinate length on first nights, and the want of proper rehearsals, there are numerous examples. 'Monte Christo,' at the Adelphi, was as nearly damned as it could be on the first representation some years ago; and not all the excellent acting of Mr. Fechter and Mr. B. Webster was able to stave off the bitter ridicule of an audience which refuses to be patient towards midnight. But when the play was 'cut,' it was a great success. Mr. Byron's 'Prompter's Box,' an excellent play at the same theatre, very nearly failed from want of rehearsals; and I remember the author actually wrote to the papers, and coolly protested against the appearance of the critics until the play had been in full swing for several nights; that is to say, Mr. Byron advocated several very bad dress-rehearsals in public, for which the public was expected to pay full theatre prices. I wonder how the public would like that arrangement. My idea is, that when a play is ready

for the public, and when public money is taken at the doors, it is ready for criticism. At any rate, it ought to be, or the public is ill-used. One of the strangest sights ever seen at a theatre was the first performance of 'Oonagh,' an Irish drama, by Mr. Falconer, at Her Majesty's Theatre. It was on a Saturday night; and it was of such an interminable length, and so profoundly dull, that the huge theatre emptied by degrees. Midnight came, still the characters went on talking. Half-past twelve struck, and the characters talked more than ever; a quarter to one, and no sign of a termination. At last, at one o'clock in the morning, three characters were standing in a row, talking away their *sesquipedalia verba*, when a couple of carpenters, no doubt of Sabbatarian principles, or, at any rate, anxious to get home to supper and to bed, pulled rapidly away the cloth on which the three actors were standing. Down they all went in a row; and immediately afterwards down went the curtain. If this had not happened, I firmly believe that 'Oonagh' would have continued until the time when the unfortunate theatre was burned to the ground. I was one of a faithful dozen who remained true to 'Oonagh,' and who saw the wonderful finale of a most extraordinary play.

Considering that we have so many theatres in London, and new plays are so constantly produced, the conspicuous failures are ridiculously few in number. But I would not answer for the consequences if the old pit resumed its

sway, and occupied its legitimate position, watching every artist with hawk-eyed interest, and protesting against all impertinences with ruthless vigour. I am sure some such corrective power is needed. No one of any decent feeling wishes to give pain, or would chuckle over the misfortunes of their fellow-creatures. Every one of any taste, I stoutly maintain, rejoices in a success, and is grieved at a failure. There is everything to be gained by the one, and nothing by the other. But managers are apt to be indifferent, authors careless, and artists take liberties when the pit is removed to the background; and the stalls are for the most part composed of ladies passionately attached to their opera-glasses, and men intent upon destroying the constitution of club tooth-picks.

To sum up. When the pit existed, plays were damned and scandals avoided. In these days of seven, and ten shilling stalls, all that the audience can do is to rise and move out. But such exhibitions of silent contempt are ascribed by many to reasons which have no weight whatever. If a group in the stalls gets up and goes out with an undisguised expression of disgust, the manager is sure to write to the papers and say that the whole audience lived at Clapham or Surbiton, and wanted to be off home. *Qui s'excuse, s'accuse*. I suppose if a play were hissed off the stage the manager would appeal to the newspapers, and say that his audience wanted to exercise their lungs!

CLEMENT W. SCOTT.



MODERN MYSTERIES.

PART II.

IN the number of this periodical for February last, I ventured to give some experiences in reference to a subject which, for more than a decade, has puzzled the researches of the curious, evoked the ridicule of the ignorant, and opened a new field of inquiry for the thoughtful.

When I undertook to introduce the subject of apparitions, in a hard, matter-of-fact age like the present, I was not wholly unmindful of the consequences. I was prepared for incredulity (as a matter of course), and I was equally ready for flat contradiction and the shafts of ridicule. I own, however, that I have been agreeably disappointed. Professional conjurers and showmen have certainly continued to palm off their mechanical contrivances and sleight-of-hand for the genuine phenomena; but the tide of public opinion is at length beginning to turn, and many now condescend to listen, and even examine, who a year or two ago were too prejudiced or too apathetic to discuss.

The able and logical articles of Mr. Alfred Wallace, in the May and June numbers of the 'Fortnightly Review,' are admirable contributions to the literature of the most astounding series of researches of which we have any record in modern times. In these papers the writer brings down his experiences to the period when Mr. Crookes, the well-known chemist, and editor of the 'Quarterly Journal of Science,' was enabled, in common with Mr. Varley, the equally famous electrician, to prove, be-

yond all possibility of doubt, that the apparitions now seen are distinct entities, or real beings, and are not phantoms of the imagination, or the creations of an abnormal condition of the brain.

I have already described, at some length, the apparition and some of the attendant phenomena produced through the mediumship of Miss Florence Cook.

Before again referring to more recent experiences acquired at *séances* when this young lady was present, I propose to narrate equally wonderful but, in some respects, different phenomena, brought about when another medium was the passive agent.

In an isolated house in a western county, the attention of the inmates has for the last twelve months or more been attracted to noises for which they could not account. Articles of furniture were moved without any one approaching them; objects were carried from one room to another without hands; bells were violently rung when nobody was near them, and many other incidents were noted, of a character to warrant the belief that the house was what is conventionally called 'haunted.' The occupants of the house are Mrs. and Miss Showers, the wife and daughter of Col. Showers, late of the Indian service. Col. Showers is now in India, on business, and the family are known, both in India and in England, to be persons unlikely to be the victims of delusion, and wholly incapable of lending themselves to anything savouring of imposition.

The unaccountable circum-

stances to which I refer became, in course of time, more surprising and mysterious. Messages were written on pieces of paper and flung down in the rooms in which the ladies were sitting, and in the garden where they were walking; and at length voices were heard, and notably one of a man who gave his name as 'Peter,' and told them that he had endeavoured to communicate with them in the first instance by writing. He gave them to understand that he and others would use the throat of the medium occasionally, and this it seems they do, although Miss Showers is unconscious that her voice organs are thus utilised. I ought to state that this young lady is about the same age as Miss Cook (between seventeen and eighteen), that her appearance and manner are pleasing, that she sings and plays as most young girls of her age do, and that she is perfectly candid, truthful, and unsophisticated. She knows no more about the wonderful faculty she possesses than do her family and friends, and she can have no possible motive or object in attempting to practise anything so foreign to her nature as wilful deception. Her state of health in childhood caused, at one time, some anxiety to her family; but she is now perfectly well.

With regard to Mrs. Showers, I ought, I think, to state that she possesses, in a marked degree, many of those qualities which the parents of eminent men and women have so frequently been endowed with. To a highly cultivated mind she adds unusual powers of discernment, individuality of character, and more than the average of that indispensable commodity—common sense. Such a woman naturally endeavoured to solve, by all the means in her power, the phenomena which took place in her presence. One of the

servants of the family is also, I understand, what is termed a 'medium,' a circumstance which may account for the physical character of the manifestations to which I have referred.

Failing, however, to arrive at any intelligible clue to the mystery, Mrs. Showers and her daughter came to town early in the present year, and became acquainted with several persons who, like themselves, were interested in the elucidation of the phenomena. They took apartments in a northern suburb, in order to be near some friends, and here I had the pleasure of being introduced to them. They had heard, of course, of Mr. Home and of Miss Kate Fox (now Mrs. Jenckin), and they had read with amazement the accounts that had been published of *séances* with Miss Florence Cook. It is right, however, I should state that they had never met that young lady, and in point of fact, did not meet her until they had been some weeks in London. I mention this because I know it may be said, by the ill-natured and censorious, 'Oh these young girls got together and played tricks to amaze and puzzle their friends.' So far from this being possible, they were living hundreds of miles apart, and had never met—had never communicated together, by letter or otherwise, and were, in fact, perfect and entire strangers to each other.

Before describing what occurred on the first occasion when I met Miss Showers, it may be desirable that I should state that the apartment in which the *séance* was held was a small front drawing-room, with a bow window just large enough to admit a table and a couple of chairs; that there were no shutters or anything to exclude light or observation, save ordinary Venetian blinds. The curtains

were of the usual damask, attached to a brass pole; but as the latter was fixed about a foot or more below the cornice of the ceiling, there was a considerable aperture through which light could be admitted into the space formed by the bow window when the curtains were drawn. I am particular in thus describing the situation of the window and of the blinds, for reasons which will be obvious hereafter. The back room was used as a bedroom, a heavy curtain being drawn across the opening usually closed by folding doors. This back room was locked before the *séance* commenced. The only persons present on this occasion were Mrs. and Miss Showers, the friend who introduced me, and myself. The fire was burning very low, and the lamp was extinguished. We sat quiescently for perhaps ten minutes, when slight knockings were heard on the pillar of the table, and subsequently on the top. The table shortly afterwards gave a sort of lurch, and then rose in the air and came down with a somewhat heavy thud. Then came a loud, clear voice, with a cheerful tone, saying 'Good evening.'

'Oh, you are come, Peter, are you!' said Mrs. Showers.

'Yes,' replied Peter, 'I am here;' and he added, 'how are you?' mentioning the name of the gentleman who had accompanied me.

Presently, 'Peter' said he would sing, if Miss Showers would play the pianoforte; and he was as good as his word, for he not only sang himself, but brought three or four other voices, who also contributed to the concert thus marvellously improvised.

'Clever ventriloquism, of course,' is the natural reply; but Miss Showers has no ventriloquial gift of any kind, and I have never

heard of a well-authenticated case of a young girl singing in a baritone voice, such as we heard on this occasion.

As, however, the argument of ventriloquism is one which it is useless to discuss in an article like this, I shall dismiss it, merely adding that no one who has heard the eight or nine voices speaking in the presence of Miss Showers believes that they are those of the young lady herself, more especially as they sometimes speak in a language utterly unknown to her. But of all the voices, that which attracted me most emanated from an entity professing to be 'Florence Maple.' The accents were clear and distinct, but, to my mind, ineffably sad. I do not think that any one who has heard that voice can readily forget it. I asked her where she lived, and she replied, in a town in Scotland, the name of which she gave. She said she had passed out of this life about six years ago, after a lingering illness, and that she would be glad to communicate with her family, but was unable to do so. She answered every question put to her readily; but on pressing her to tell me why her voice was so *triste* in tone, she begged me not to press her on the subject. She promised, however, to show us, if possible, the face and form from which the voice was emanating.

Miss Showers subsequently went behind the curtain; and the table being removed, she seated herself in a chair, while a lighted candle, a roll of tape, and some sealing-wax and a seal were placed on another chair. The curtains were then drawn and pinned together by myself and Mrs. Showers, and the wick of the lamp was turned down. There was still, however, sufficient light to observe every object in the room. In a few

minutes the voice of 'Peter' was again heard, and he told us he was going to 'tie up Rosie,' that being one of Miss Showers' names. We subsequently heard the sound of the tape being drawn up and down, and on asking Miss Showers what was going on and what she saw, she replied that the tape was being tied round her wrists and waist, but that she could not see any hands engaged in the operation. In a little time, 'Peter' called out 'Would you like to see her?' We pulled back the curtains, and found her very ingeniously tied by the wrists and waist, the ends of the tape being passed through one of the brass fittings of the Venetian blind. The seals were not, however, made to my satisfaction, and on my remarking upon them, the voice said, 'Seal her yourself.' The candle and lamp were then burning; but I could not see any figure from which the voice could have emanated. I then took the sealing-wax and sealed the tape at the young lady's waist, also at her wrists, and again at the place where the final fastening was made. We subsequently extinguished the candle, drew the curtains as before, and remained to watch the progress of events.

'Peter' talked away, and told us that he was sending 'Rosie' to sleep; but that she was tied so tight that he had some difficulty in doing so. He then sang; and after an interval of some minutes we heard the clear, sad voice of Florence joining in his song.

'Oh, you are there, Florence!' we said, and she answered 'Yes, I am here; would you not like to see me?' Of course we replied in the affirmative. Mrs. Showers then made an opening in the curtains where they met, by pinning back the folds, and a face appeared. It was that of a female, older, I think, than the medium, and

equally good-looking. The complexion was pallid, but not unpleasantly so, and the eyes were large, and seemed to look straight out, without turning to the right or left. The head was enveloped in white, and no hair was visible. We could, however, see her hands. She was unquestionably very like the medium, save in one important feature—the nose was straighter. The eyes, too, were larger. She spoke to us; and occasionally the head disappeared, as if in the direction of the medium. She said she had not materialised her body, but would endeavour to do so on a future occasion.

On subsequently drawing aside the curtains, we found Miss Showers in a trance. The tapes were tied precisely as we left them, and the seals were unbroken.

A few nights afterwards, I again had an opportunity of witnessing the phenomena. In this case I was accompanied by a friend, who certainly did not at that time (whatever he may do now) believe in the possibility of apparitions. Miss Showers was told to go into the bedroom; and, having seated herself on the bed, she was subsequently found tied to the metal-work at the foot of it, and sealed with tape and wax provided by myself for the purpose. We then withdrew to the front room; and shortly afterwards the curtain was pushed aside, and out stepped Florence Maple, literally and figuratively 'as large as life.' She had a head-dress similar to that worn the preceding night, as also a long white robe, fastened up to the throat and sweeping the carpet. I advanced to meet her; and she took my hand, and sat beside me on the sofa. The lamp was on the mantel-shelf, and she said the light was too strong for her. I offered to reduce it, but she got up and did it herself. She

then went to the piano and played and sang. My friend asked whether he might approach her, and she at once acquiesced, without making any condition whatever. He came up and scrutinised her features, saying, 'Surely you are Miss Showers.' At this time I really believe that Mrs. Showers was of opinion that it was her daughter, who had been set free from her bonds, and was walking about in a state of trance. I did not, although I agreed with my friend that the apparition was very like the medium.

'I am not, I assure you, the medium,' said Florence, in her softest accents; and she added, 'I know I am very like her.'

I pointed out to my friend that the figure was taller than Miss Showers; and she said, 'Yes, I am taller.'

On this occasion the apparition returned only twice or thrice, and then for a moment or two only to the medium. She was, I should think, about three-quarters of an hour in the room with us. On eventually entering the back room to release the medium, we found her tied and sealed precisely as we had left her. How she got back again into her ligatures was a puzzle to my friend, who no doubt found a solution (as nearly everybody else would have done under similar circumstances) for the rest of the manifestations in ventriloquism, and in the dexterity with which the young lady had slipped out of the tapes and dressed herself up to play the part of a ghost!

On another occasion, when Miss Showers was securely fastened behind the curtain, and when 'Peter' was singing, and when the apparition was out in the room talking to us, the servants of a friend who accompanied me were standing outside with the carriage, so that no person could (as has been

hinted) have got access to the room from the street, to help in an imposture.

But, happily for Miss Showers, as also for Miss Cook, who may have been unjustly suspected, the period was approaching for their vindication. The attempt that had been made to seize and detain the figure of 'Katie King' at Mr. Cook's had caused much concern to Miss Cook and her family. The former felt all the pain with which a generous and sensitive mind is penetrated at being the object of unworthy suspicion, and the latter were equally anxious to vindicate their honesty and fair fame; for it is idle to deny that, if Miss Cook had been guilty of deception, every member of her family must have been equally compromised with her. It was under these circumstances that 'Florence Maple' was asked, if possible, to allow the medium to be seen with her at one and the same moment. This, it was hoped, would be sufficient to disarm the most sceptical, and to silence the ridicule of the ignorant. I need scarcely say that this test was not considered by any means necessary by those who had traced the phenomena through all their stages, who had adopted, without the detection of imposture, every test and contrivance that ingenuity could devise, and who knew the character of the media. They felt, however, that as the *bona-fides* of Miss Cook had been doubted (chiefly on account of the similarity of the apparition to the medium), and as a gross outrage had been committed upon her, and might be perpetrated upon other mediums in similar positions, it was all-important that the apparition and the medium should not only be seen simultaneously, but should be actually touched and felt. Those who are acquainted with the phenomena have reason

to believe that any seizure of the apparition may have an injurious effect upon the medium, so subtle and sympathetic is the chain of communication between them. Seeing both and touching both was therefore the crucial test, so to speak, because the phenomena are so astounding that even well-intentioned and candid persons, anxious to ascertain the truth, but still prejudiced in favour of ignorance and the accepted traditions of science, could never be brought to believe in their genuine character unless the senses of vision as well as of touch were both satisfied. Representations on this subject were, I believe, made both to 'Katie King' and 'Florence Maple,' and both promised that, if possible, the test should be given.

It was, consequently, with no ordinary sense of satisfaction that I availed myself of the invitation of Mr. Luxmoore, of Gloucester Square, to be present at a *séance* at which it was hoped the apparition and the medium might be seen together. The only guests invited by Mr. Luxmoore were Mrs. and Miss Showers, a gentleman well known to us both to be much interested in the subject, and myself. The *séance* took place on the 6th of April. After dinner, we sat in the back drawing-room, from which light was excluded by drawing a curtain over an opening between the sliding doors that separated the front from the back room. Miss Showers occupied a seat on the sofa; Mr. Luxmoore, a chair next the sofa on her left; then came Mrs. Showers, then myself, and lastly the fourth visitor on the right of Miss Showers. The round table was pushed up to the sofa, so that Miss Showers could not possibly have left her place without our being aware of the fact. Presently, the voices

came. Firstly, 'Peter'; then that of 'Florence'; then a voice that called itself 'Lenore,' and others. After some singing (in which we took no part), we asked to have something brought to us from the other room. Immediately afterwards, something was heard touching the table; and upon a light being struck, some of the ornaments that had been in the front drawing-room were found on the table before us. We then asked that something might be brought from the dining-room, and shortly afterwards some of the dessert was thrown down! A hand-bell was then rung in various parts of the room—now up near the ceiling—now down near the floor—now near, and now far off. Hands subsequently touched us all round, and patted our faces from behind our chairs; while Miss Showers assured us of her presence in her seat on the sofa by speaking to us all the time.

We subsequently returned to the front drawing-room; and Miss Showers having taken a seat in an easy-chair immediately behind the sliding door in the back room, the curtain was drawn over the opening, the lamp was turned down, and we awaited the result. 'Peter' spoke, as usual, and sang; and in a short time we recognised the voice of 'Florence,' and 'Florence' herself came out and advanced to the farther end of the room, where we were seated. She spoke to us in a less sedate manner than usual, moved about the room from place to place, and seemed immensely pleased with a fan that I had brought her, and which was eventually found in the lap of the medium when the *séance* was over.

As Mrs. and Miss Showers were to leave town the following day, and knowing the importance of getting the crucial test on that occasion, I said to Florence, 'I want

you particularly to give me a test that must satisfy everybody.' She replied, 'I will, if I can.' I then said, 'I want to see you and the medium together, as you know it is said that you are so like the medium that you must be one and the same person.' Her answer was, 'I will try.' No condition of any kind was imposed. 'Florence' then went behind the curtain, and a minute or two afterwards reappeared, and, beckoning me forward, said, 'Come and see her.' I responded immediately, and crossing the room, stood beside the figure. She was then, I should add, taller than the medium, and, to my view, had a certain angularity of form which I had never observed in Miss Showers. She then drew aside the curtain with her left hand, and, pointing with her right, said, 'Look!' There, seated in the chair as we had left her, but with her head thrown over her left shoulder, and the right side of her face visible, was unquestionably the immobile and unconscious form of Miss Showers! There could be no mistake about it. It was no delusion. She was there, beyond all possibility of doubt. Having satisfied myself on this point, I returned to my seat; but on the reappearance of 'Florence' immediately afterwards, I said, 'Will you give me one more test to satisfy me?' The answer was, as before, 'I will, if I can; but what is it?' I replied, 'I want this crowning test: I want to follow you instantly behind the curtain; and I wish to place the light so that I can see well into the room.' 'Florence' at once acceded. She made no stipulation beyond this: 'Come when I call you, and come quickly.' The latter part of the injunction was quite unnecessary. I then placed a small benzine-lamp on the sofa, about three feet from the curtain, and

sat down. I was then so near the sliding doors that I could have reached them with my left hand without rising to my feet. I had not been seated more than a few seconds, when 'Florence,' partly opening the curtain, extended her hand, and said, 'Come now.' I sprang up, and, throwing aside the curtain, which I held wide back with my left hand, stood inside, and could see—nothing, except Miss Showers still in a trance in the arm-chair. 'Where are you, Florence?' I exclaimed; but there was no answer. I strained my eyes to see any moving object, but failed. The figure in white that I had seen a second before had absolutely vanished into air! Still holding back the curtain, that I might get as much light as possible, I repeated the question, 'Florence, where are you?' Then there came from the corner of the room immediately behind the medium the well remembered voice of Florence, 'Oh, I am here! do you not see me?' I could see nothing. 'I cannot see you,' I said; 'but if you are there, touch me, and let me touch the medium at the same time.' I then extended my right arm until it rested on the head of the medium. Immediately on doing so my fingers were grasped by an invisible hand! The touch was rather cold, and in all respects similar to that of the apparition whose hands I had felt several times while she was in the front drawing-room talking with us.

I returned to my seat perfectly satisfied—firstly, that the apparition was a thoroughly materialised form, instinct with intelligence; and secondly, that it could disappear at will, by making itself instantaneously invisible. This latter phase of the phenomena I look upon as even more marvelous than the materialisation.

In connection with materialisation and immaterialisation, this may be a convenient place to refer to an objection taken by persons but partially acquainted with the phenomena, and which, I admit, is not capable of satisfactory explanation off-hand. I have, for instance, heard persons say, 'Why should a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes elapse between the hearing of the second voice and the appearance of the form from which it proceeds? and why should the interval be occupied with music, singing, conversation, &c.?' The question is reasonable enough, it must be owned, although it may not be answered in such a manner as to banish suspicion from a prejudiced mind. The question has been put to the form when visible and invisible, and the answer invariably is that music promotes harmony (an essential element of success), and that when the sitters are singing and in conversation it becomes easier to draw power from them. Whatever be the measure of belief which such answers are calculated to inspire, the necessity no longer exists for either raising the objection or supplying a rejoinder. As a matter of indisputable fact, the apparition now appears without that suspicious interval to which I have referred, and which many persons thought was devoted to the undressing of the medium preparatory to playing the part of a 'ghost.' On several recent occasions, and in the presence of persons of undoubted credit and veracity, the apparition known as 'Katie King' or 'Annie Morgan' has appeared within two or three minutes after the medium has become entranced. She has come arrayed in white, with a veil, and head-dress, and naked feet, while the medium has at the same time been seen costumed in her ordinary

attire, and with her usual shoes and stockings. Moreover, the medium, when entering the room, has been observed to wear gold ear-rings, while the ears of 'Katie King' were undecorated, and had never even been pierced! This is certainly hard to get over; but harder still remains behind.

The apparition in question having repeatedly informed Miss Cook and her friends that she could not remain longer, or rather that she would not be able to manifest herself after the 21st of May last, some *séances* of a farewell character were held at Hackney in the beginning of that month. On Wednesday the 13th, 'Katie King' appeared after a short interval. There were present, I think, about twenty persons, some of whom were absolute strangers to each other. In the course of the *séance*, a lady and a gentleman (not belonging to the same family, or even friends) were invited behind the curtain, and both touched the sleeping medium and the animated apparition at the same time. Mr. S. C. Hall, the well-known *littérateur*, and editor of the 'Art Journal,' having asked a variety of questions, was favoured with a special test. Just before the conclusion of the sitting, 'Katie' threw back the curtain, and said to Mr. Crookes, 'Turn up the gas as high as you can, and let Mr. Hall come in.' He did as he was directed; Mr. Hall rushed behind the curtain, but declared that he could see nothing but the impassive form on the carpet. 'Katie' had instantaneously disappeared.

On Saturday the 16th of May, a *séance* very similar in character was held in the same house; and 'Katie' again assured us that, as the three years within which alone she could show herself would expire on the following Thursday (the 21st of May), she wished cer-

tain persons who had witnessed the development of the phenomena to be present. It was also arranged that some further photographic experiments should be made by Mr. Crookes under a magnesium light. These were made on the following Wednesday (20th May). On this occasion I was the only stranger present, the rest of the sitters consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Cook and the members of Mr. Crookes' own family. The cabinet was improvised in this manner. The swab of a sofa and a pillow were laid on the floor of the library. One of the folding doors was then shut, and a curtain was loosely hung over the aperture thus caused. Miss Cook lay down on the cushion, and we sat in the adjoining room, used by our host as his laboratory. In a very few minutes, without any prelude for music or singing, we heard the voice of 'Katie,' and immediately afterwards she drew aside the curtain and stood before us. She was, beyond all question, taller, stouter, and more developed than the medium; while her hair was much longer, and seemed to be of a light chestnut colour. She spoke to me, and expressed her regret that I could not be present at her final *séance* the following evening. She allowed me to feel her arm and hand, and touch her ringlets, so that I might be assured that they were real for all present purposes. She subsequently bore a stronger light, and then we distinctly saw the form of Miss Cook, but with a shawl thrown over her head. She requested Mrs. Crookes to bring her chair behind the curtain, that she might chat with her unreservedly, as she added that she would never see her again. Mrs. Crookes went accordingly. 'Katie' afterwards broke up a bouquet of flowers, provided for her by Mrs. Crookes; and made up

smaller bouquets, presenting one to each person present. Mr. Crookes and others then asked her for some of her hair. Calling for a scissors, she cut a ringlet for Mrs. Crookes, and gave me one about five inches long. It was then discovered to be of that colour which used to be popular with the great Italian painters, and which we see so often in the works of Francia, Raffael, Dominichino, and others. Mr. Crookes subsequently asked for a ringlet, but stipulated that he should be allowed to cut it himself from the roots; and this was permitted, without the slightest remonstrance or condition of any kind. I ought to add here that the hair of the medium is short for a female, and nearly black.

The camera was then prepared for photographing the figure, and the process was substantially similar to that adopted at the house of Miss Cook's father, a twelve-month ago. 'Katie' bore the intense glare without shrinking, and I can only compare her figure to an illuminated statue in Parian marble. She wore a white robe, cut low at the neck; short sleeves, showing a well-moulded arm; and a double skirt or tunic. Her head was draped in white, and her ringlets hung behind in profusion. When she stood erect, she was observed to be considerably taller than the medium; her complexion was also much fairer. She came, as usual, with naked feet.

The figure was as I myself saw it photographed at Hackney, with the agency of magnesium light. The operator in this case was Mr. W. H. Harrison, a gentleman well known in connection with scientific and daily newspaper literature in the metropolis. Mr. Harrison is a very matter-of-fact person, and is not at all disposed to take anything for granted when scien-

tific truth is the object of investigation.

As absolute exactitude is necessary in describing the process by which so astounding a result as the photographing of a materialised apparition was accomplished, I have asked Mr. Harrison to relate in his own words the *modus operandi* :—

'Many conditions had to be complied with to secure successful results. A harmonious circle was necessary, that the medium might be at ease, free from all care and anxiety, in order that the manifestations should be given with the greater power. It was necessary that the medium should not sit too frequently, and have little to do at other times, so as to reserve power and vital energy for the *séances*. In short, all the conditions which Spiritualists know to favour good manifestations were supplied as nearly as possible on this occasion.

'The cabinet being in one of the corners of a room in the basement of the house, the light was too weak, and not in the best direction for photographic purposes. For the same reason that spirits can always handle old musical instruments better than new ones, and that the manifestations are usually stronger after a medium has lived for some time in the house, it was not desirable to make a new cabinet, the old one being well charged with those imponderable emanations from the medium, of which science at present knows nothing. It was, therefore, thought desirable to use the old cabinet, and to do the photographing by the magnesium light.

'Magnesium ribbon will not ignite readily at a desired moment, and sometimes goes out unexpectedly, so would be liable to cause many failures. As both materialised spirit forms and photo-

graphic plates deteriorate rapidly after they are prepared in perfection, it was necessary to have a light which should not fail at a critical moment.

'Accordingly, magnesium powder mixed with sand was used, on the principle devised by Mr. Henry Larkins. A narrow deal board, three feet long, was nailed to a base-board, and firmly held in a vertical position. A Bunsen's burner, to consume gas mixed with common air, was fixed horizontally through the vertical board, and an indiarubber tube supplied the burner with common gas. The end of a funnel was then brought close to the gas-flame. When some magnesium powder and sand were poured into the latter the stream caught fire, and produced a flame of dazzling brilliancy. The larger the proportion of magnesium in the powder, the larger was the flame; and the best results were obtained with a flame averaging two feet in length, and lasting for five or six seconds.

'As might be expected, there was more success in obtaining positives than negatives, as a shorter exposure would do for the former. The ordinary processes were used—namely, a thirty-five grain nitrate of silver bath, and proto-sulphate of iron development. Mawson's collodion. A half-plate camera and lens were used, with a stop rather less than an inch in diameter, between the front and back combinations of the lens.'

As already stated, I was prevented by another engagement from witnessing the final departure of 'Katie King,' on the 21st of May; but I am enabled to adduce the testimony of two or three eye-witnesses as to what actually occurred. The party assembled was limited to a few

ladies and gentlemen who had taken an earnest interest in the phenomena from the first, and to the family of which Miss Cook herself is the eldest child. My informant in this case was not Mr. Harrison, but a lady well known in society, whose name I do not give, simply because I have not asked her permission to publish it. She says:—

'On the 21st inst., the occasion of "Katie's" last appearance amongst us, she was good enough to give me what I consider a still more infallible proof (if one could be needed) of the distinction of her ideality from that of her medium. When she summoned me in my turn to say a few words to her behind the curtain, I again saw and touched the warm breathing body of Florence Cook lying on the floor, and then stood upright by the side of "Katie," who desired me to place my hands inside the loose single garment which she wore, and feel her body. I did so thoroughly. I felt her heart beating rapidly beneath my hand; and passed my fingers through her long hair, to satisfy myself that it grew from her head, and can testify that, if she be of "psychic force," psychic force is very like a woman.

"Katie" was very busy that evening. To each of her friends assembled to say good-bye she gave a bouquet of flowers tied up with ribbon, a piece of her dress and veil, and a lock of her hair, and a note which she wrote with her pencil before us. Mine was as follows: "From Annie Owen de Morgan (alias Katie King) to her friend —, with love. *Pensez à moi.* May 21st, 1874." I must not forget to relate what appeared to me one of the most convincing proofs of Katie's more than natural power, namely, that when she had cut, before our eyes, twelve or

fifteen different pieces of cloth from the front of her white tunic as *souvenirs* for her friends, there was not a hole to be seen in it, examine it which way you would. It was the same with her veil, and I have seen her do the same thing several times.'

I may add that I have seen the pieces of cloth cut from the tunic. Another eye-witness tells me that fifteen or sixteen pieces were cut in his presence, and that the front of the skirt 'looked like a cullender,' but that all 'Katie' did to restore it to its original shape was to bring the folds together with her hands, and then shake them out again, when the skirt was found to be whole and entire as before! I do not presume to supply a solution for this or any other phase of the phenomena.

In drawing attention to the subject, it is not my desire to speculate, much less to dogmatise. All I care to do is to invite candid inquiry. But to secure this I find to be a matter of enormous difficulty. Here is an illustration. Wishing to attract the attention of a friend—a man of great ability in the scientific world, and an admitted authority upon those subjects, which may be regarded as his specialities—I addressed him thus: 'You are an F.R.S., a deep thinker, and widely known for your scientific attainments; therefore, what you say will carry weight. Will you accompany me to a private house, and see a non-professional medium? Satisfy yourself by every possible expedient that your ingenuity can devise that imposture is impossible, and tell me what you think of it.' The answer was, 'I don't believe in it, and I don't care to take up new things; but I will meet any man you like on my own ground!'

This response might be reasonable enough when all that was

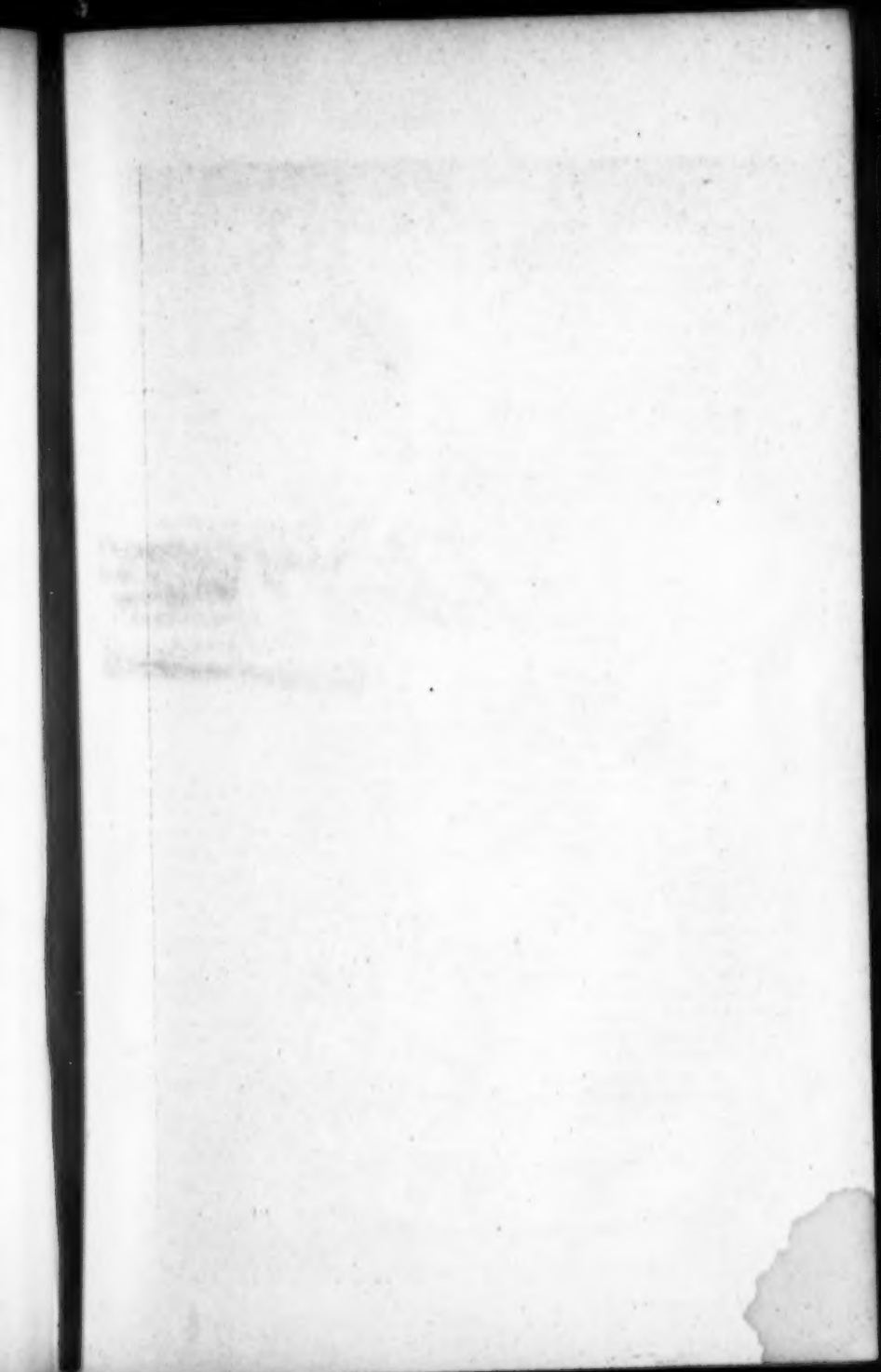
known of the phenomena was limited to table-turning, rappings, bell-ringing, and the other elementary, and possibly frivolous, indications of a physical power exterior to the body. But the phenomena have now passed out of the realm of conjecture, and have entered the region of fact. Science may still fold its arms and stand aloof. It did the same in all the earlier developments of those great discoveries which will make the Victorian age the grandest epoch of the world's history. Had the lowly disciples of Science been dismayed or discouraged by the ridicule of the ignorant or the sneers of the learned, we should never have had the railway, the telegraph, or the photograph. Men still living can remember when travellers from Plymouth or York to London were four or five days on the road, and made their wills before they left home; when the streets of London were dimly lighted by oil; and when the man who proclaimed that it would be possible to travel with ease and comparative safety fifty or sixty miles an hour, or that the Queen and the President of the United States could converse together, the one at Windsor and the other at Washington, would have been looked upon as a hopeless lunatic!

I admit, with the utmost frankness, that what I have related as perfectly true is, at the same time, as diametrically opposed to all the researches of science as to all the traditions of probability. When I assert that two ladies and three gentlemen sit down in a room, and that room in their own house, and

lock the door, and that they are shortly afterwards joined by another individual (making the party six, instead of five), and that the sixth, in the form of a woman, talks with them for an hour, sings, plays, walks about, and does many things that they do, and that she then throws back the curtain by which she entered and shows you the living form of the fifth, and permits you at one and the same time to feel her, and also feel the insensible figure to which she points, and which you recognise as the fifth—then I say that an astounding and inexplicable fact has been established, which challenges the attention of the thoughtful, and demands all the scrutiny that science can bring to bear upon it.

I advance no theories of my own to explain or account for what I have seen. All I lay claim to is critical accuracy for my description of experiences, acquired in many cases under circumstances which would have given me especial facilities for the detection and exposure of fraud. I found none. My story, and those of others far more competent to deal with the subject, may be discredited. We care not. We can afford to wait. Time is on our side. Facts which to-day are contemptuously denied will to-morrow be admitted and vindicated. Out of the mists of ignorance and prejudice light will be evolved. Through the rifts in the clouds that obscure the future I think I can discern a form that, in the fulness of time, will assume the majestic image of Truth.

HENRY M. DUNPHY.





Drawn by R. Newcombe.]

M A R I E.

ALDERLIEFSTAD

LONG had I wandered in Circassia's woods,
 Where dreams of love are only distant shades,
 And known the callid kindness of white hands,
 And lips like lilies set in adder's-grass;
 True love came not, Marie; I turned aside,
 And stayed, and felt a cursed one as I stood,
 Till you were with me as a gracious guide,
 And then I knew the world that it is good.

Love's garden had erewhile begun to parch
 In thunder heat, and no sweet rain to sing;
 And I was fainting in my weary march,—
 The day to me was but a deadly thing,
 And night a terror: and the sun heat grew;
 It choked green things with dust, and cracked the land;
 And no rain fell on earth and no wind blew;
 Then, sinking, I was saved by your dear hand.

And then the coolness came, and drought was done,
 And blessed showers of rain fell through the night,
 With quiet hopeful music, till the sun
 Showed all my blossoms shining red and white,
 You were my rainbow-love, the promise given,
 On that blue silent morning after rain,
 That my new heart should not be newly given,
 Nor my new garden bent with blight again.

THEY ROSELEN.



Drawn by R. Newcombe.]

M A R I E.

ALDERLIEFEST.

LONG had I wandered in Circean lands,
 Where dreams of love are only dreams that pass,
 And known the callid kindness of white hands,
 And lips like lilies set in adder's-grass :
 True love came not, Marie ; I turned aside,
 And stayed, and felt a cursed one as I stood,
 Till you were with me as a gracious guide,
 And then I knew the world that it is good.

Love's garden had erewhile begun to parch
 In thunder heat, and no sweet rain to sing ;
 And I was fainting in my weary march,—
 The day to me was but a deadly thing,
 And night a terror : and the sun heat grew ;
 It choked green things with dust, and cracked the land ;
 And no rain fell on earth and no wind blew ;
 Then, sinking, I was saved by your dear hand.

And then the coolness came, and drought was done,
 And blessed showers of rain fell through the night,
 With quiet hopeful music, till the sun
 Showed all my blossoms shining red and white :
 You were my rainbow-love, the promise given,
 On that blue silent morning after rain,
 That my new heart should not be sorely riven,
 Nor my new garden bent with blight again.

GUY ROSLYN.

THE QUEEN'S TOKEN.

By MRS. CASHEL HOBY.

CHAPTER IV.

GEMMA.

FORTY years ago, tourists in Cornwall, who did not then form a numerous class, had their attention carefully directed to the situation and the architecture of Tredethlyn Castle, the ancestral dwelling of Sir Bernard Tredethlyn, and to the beauty and luxuriance of the gardens which stretched seawards, under the castellated walls of a mansion which had all that is most romantic in natural scenery to recommend it, and no drawback but its remoteness. It was indeed a remote place, out of the way of all but special visitors, and in a district whose inhabitants had preserved the traditions and customs of olden times with quite surprising fidelity and persistence. The castle was a stately dwelling, and had, during the centuries of its existence, housed a stately race, true to the ancient fealties in faith and in politics. No Tredethlyn of Tredethlyn had ever conformed to the Established religion, or, while the standard of the House of Stuart was raised anywhere, had ever acknowledged the House of Hanover. Thus, there had been many exiles among them, when their sentiments were made obnoxiously perceptible to the parties in power and possession, whether in Church or in State, and confiscation and fines had frequently lessened their worldly wealth considerably. But through all, the Tredethlyns kept their faith, and kept their ancestral home. Sometimes the castle had no sojourner within its precincts, except the few old retainers of the family left

in charge of it, for a score of years together; sometimes there was right noble state kept there. But, in the latter case, the company invariably included many foreign elements. Frenchmen, Italians, Spaniards, who had no *entrée* into the great world of the English metropolis, were welcome at Tredethlyn, and came and went, retaining an impression of the place where they had been so hospitably entertained, as though it were an enchanted castle in a fairy tale, embowered in roses, laurels, myrtles and flowering shrubs, with far outlying ramparts of great cliffs, and the guardian sea beyond. The Tredethlyns of Tredethlyn were remarkable for their foreign alliances. Dark-eyed, dark-haired women, with a southern flush upon their handsome faces, and the graceful freedom of the south in their carriage and gestures, who spoke no word of the English tongue, had come over the sea, from beyond that Mont St. Michel which repeated theirs, the Cornish people had heard say, at the other side of the Channel, and wedded with the Tredethlyns. There could be no blood, even royal, too pure, too noble to mix with theirs, and none of the race had ever wedded beneath him; thus, the ladies who had ruled in the ancient Cornish castle had all been noble, and even in one instance there had been talk of royal lineage. But the people did not know much of that. A distant cousin of the King of France had been saved, in awful times, from the dangers of royalty

in her own country, and by a Tredethlyn, so ran the story; and she had married her preserver, and lived in the Cornish castle only just long enough to leave him a little daughter, who grew up and in her turn married a Tredethlyn, her own cousin, and her father's heir. Blanche Tredethlyn also died young, and left a daughter.

It was traditional in the family, that when in England, all its members resided at home. The old feudal spirit dwelt strongly in them; they loved their people, as they still, without the slightest insolent meaning, called their tenants and neighbours, who, being still a primitive people, loved them. But the Tredethlyns were a travelled race, and even in the later times, the castle was often empty, while its masters were exploring the beauties of Nature, or the treasures of Art, in distant lands.

From a long spell of such emptiness and silence the castle was aroused, in the early summer time, forty years ago, by the return of Sir Bernard Tredethlyn, with a numerous suite, including his only daughter, a young French lady her friend, and several servants. The people were very curious to see Sir Bernard's daughter, who had been sent to France, and placed in the charge of certain persons of rank, just then basking in the light of the second Restoration, and who were relations of her mother. The young lady of Tredethlyn Castle would be no unimportant person among her humbler neighbours. No Tredethlyn had ever been known to contract a second marriage, even when no male heir had been born of his first, and Sir Bernard was not likely to depart from the customs of his forefathers in this respect. The estates in Cornwall

were entailed on heirs male, but during her father's lifetime there was no doubt that Miss Tredethlyn would remain undisputed mistress of the castle. It was said in the county that Sir Bernard had saved very large sums of money for the purpose of purchasing a landed estate for his daughter, which should place her, at his death, or her marriage, in a position almost of equality with his successor in the Cornish property. Sir Bernard had been travelling in Ireland for some time before he joined his daughter at Paris, and people had heard tell that he had bought a fine place there, down in the South, but that there was no house upon it, only a beautiful old ruin. But all this was hitherto only hearsay, and the chief concern of the place was that Sir Bernard and his daughter were coming home, and that it was to be hoped the young lady was nice in her ways, and could speak like other people, and not only 'gibberish'—which was to be apprehended, considering that she had lived so long in a place where it was natural, and more was the pity, for every one to talk gibberish.

Sir Bernard and his daughter arrived duly, and were greeted with the heartiness, quite devoid of servility, which characterises the Cornish peasantry. The carriages were closely scrutinised as they passed the groups collected at the gates of the castle, and along the carriage road, every one being desirous of catching the first glimpse of Miss Tredethlyn.

There was but one opinion of the young lady's personal appearance, and it was as freely expressed as unanimous.

'Did ever eyes see a more beautiful face?' the men and women asked each other; 'such a fine, ruddy colour, and such piercing, bright black eyes, and such dark,

thick curls, and such a smile?' 'When she got out of the carriage with her little dog in her arms, she looked like a queen.' Such and such like were the remarks made concerning the young lady, and the speakers were still lingering about, giving vent to their admiration, when Daniel Penfold, the steward came down from the castle, and joined the foremost of the groups, when they once more commented on Miss Tredethlyn's beauty, grace, and, above all, on her height, that physical quality so specially admirable in the eyes of the Cornish people.

Daniel Penfold looked at first puzzled, then amused, finally he said, with a laugh:

'Tut, tut! you are all wrong together. The young lady with the black eyes and hair, who is so tall and slender, and looks as if the castle and everything in it belonged to her, is not Miss Tredethlyn.'

'Not Miss Tredethlyn!' exclaimed the chief spokeswoman of the party. 'Who is she then? And what is Miss Tredethlyn like?'

'That young lady is a friend of Miss Tredethlyn's. She is French, and I don't know her name—her surname, I mean—it is a long one; but I heard Miss Tredethlyn call her Gemma, which is French for Emma, I suppose. As for Miss Blanche, she is a pale little thing, and looks more like the French young lady's waiting-maid. She sat beside her in the first carriage, but no wonder nobody saw her. She used to be such a pretty child, too.'

'Dangerous company for Miss Blanche,' said a shrewd-looking old woman, who had followed the steward's words with keen attention. 'She'd ha' done better to leave her after her in her own

country. She'll be setting her cap at Sir Bernard, and putting Miss Blanche out of her place next.'

'No, no, Mother Skirrow,' said the steward, 'no fear of that. A Tredethlyn marries but one wife. And for all she's so pale, and thin, and little, Sir Bernard thinks there's nothing like his daughter, that's plain to be seen; and they say there isn't, in point of learning and such like, speaking foreign languages, and playing music.'

Miss Tredethlyn had been so long absent from her home that she had almost as much sense of novelty in making her friend acquainted with it as the handsome young Frenchwoman had in being introduced to the ancient, stately mansion, which combined the grandeur of the old and the comfort and elegance of modern times, as only the feudal dwellings of England combine them. The two girls roamed about through the long galleries, in the quaint, rich chambers, and in the ancient turrets, where a ghostly assemblage of old furniture and antique chests supplied them with objects of curiosity and interest. Tredethlyn Castle was rich in ancient china, in books and manuscripts, and in many specimens of carved wood. The treacherous sea had often cast up upon that wild coast rich treasures, whose owners it held in its bosom for ever more; and many of the most famous and prized possessions of Tredethlyn were of Spanish origin, the spoils of the superb galleons which had been lost in the ill-advised expedition against England in the old, old times. In the north gallery there stood, under the long lanceolated windows, two huge low chests of some precious black wood, carved so richly and so curiously, that many who had seen them said the Florentine palaces had nothing more beautiful or

costly to show, and that, with their scrolls and garlands, their angels' heads and cunningly-twisted silver handles, they were fit to have been the coffers of a queen. Many bits of quaint jewelry and armour were also among the castle's gear, and there was a story current that a Venice glass had once been borne inshore uninjured, and carried to the lady of Tredethlyn, who gave the salvage men a rich reward, and had the glass placed in her own chamber. But it lay broken on the ground next morning, and the lady told her waiting-woman that she had thrown it down by accident, and accounted for her paleness and disorder by saying that it was of ill omen to break a mirror. But people said it had transpired afterwards, the lady not being able to keep the knowledge of the terrible thing undivulged, that she had dashed the mirror to the ground in a sudden access of terror, having seen in it another face beside her own. The face was that of a woman, very pale and sorrowful, but dignified and beautiful beyond belief, with hazel eyes and rich brown hair, adorned with a strange head-dress, the like of which the lady had never seen. As she looked into the mirror, the fair face grew dim, and began to fade; and then a slender hand was passed across the white throat, and the face was gone. Such was the story which was whispered abroad about Tredethlyn, and it is certain that the lady caused every atom of the broken glass to be ground up and buried in the earth, and that she entreated her husband, Sir Michael, to take her away from the castle, which, she declared, was haunted.

In the chapel attached to the castle there were also many pieces of deeply-carved wood, and other waifs from the sea, notably the

wrought brass lamp in the sanctuary, with its long swinging chains, had belonged to a noble ship in which a Spanish bishop had sailed, and which had gone to pieces off the coast of Cornwall. Not a life was saved, but many of the drowned were washed on shore, and the Spanish bishop's grave was made before the altar in the chapel of Tredethlyn Castle. Blanche and her friend heard these and many other histories from the old priest, who had lived there since before her birth, had indeed been her grandfather's private chaplain, and was still her father's, and pastor of the scanty flock who dwelt in the vicinity of the castle. Mr. Vaughan was a learned man, quite a recluse, with great local knowledge, who had never seen much of the world, and had not liked what he had seen. He was very tranquil and happy at Tredethlyn, where he took care of the library, and watched over the well-being of the pictures. He had not been particularly delighted at learning that his beloved solitude was about to be interrupted by the return of Sir Bernard and his daughter; but he had soon become reconciled to the change, and found he could take a lively interest in Blanche and in her young friend. Their tastes were similar to his, while their knowledge was so immeasurably inferior that he had the pleasure of constantly instructing them.

It was Mr. Vaughan who accompanied the two girls in their exploration of the ancient portions of the castle, and who brought out of the storehouse of his memory innumerable legends, traditions, and veritable histories which enriched every nook and corner of the old building, and fostered the romantic tastes common to the two, who were otherwise so

unlikely. He could assign a date to every object, and resuscitate the history of its time; conjure up the spirits of the past, and surround his companions—his pupils, as they called themselves—with the atmosphere of the chivalrous and legendary ages.

The isolation of Tredethlyn Castle was a boon to its young mistress. She had many visitors, it is true, but they came at stated times, and made the usual stay 'a rest day, a dressed day, and a pressed day,' and then departed, leaving her time free, not subject to the constant, meaningless interruptions which are the bane of modern 'society.' There was nothing in her luxurious, stately life of the senseless whirl, the utter mindlessness and soullessness of fashionable existence. Sir Bernard and his daughter might have been a sixteenth-century *seigneur* and *châtelaine* in their feudal dignity, their tenure of honour and obedience, and their entire absorption in local interests and avocations. The apprehensions of Mother Skirrow were unfounded. Sir Bernard was very kind to his daughter's friend, strictly courteous to his foreign guest; but he was, perhaps, the only person who had ever seen the two together, and failed to perceive that Blanche was not comparable in external charms with the beautiful, graceful, accomplished, dignified, and high-spirited Gemma di Valdimonte.

Blanche Tredethlyn was not a pretty girl. She had no beauty of feature, except such as might be found in her dark-grey eyes, which had unusual depth and nobility of expression, and in the soft, pathetic lines of a mouth which wore the impress of her high birth and gentle nurture. She was pale, and slight, and small, and her face wore a thought-

ful, dreamy expression, which marred its youthfulness, and spoke to the observant of a mind matured and serious beyond her years.

'Your name is Italian, but your language is French,' said Mr. Vaughan to Gemma di Valdimonte a few days after the arrival at Tredethlyn, and when they were examining the lumber room already mentioned.

'I am French,' replied Gemma, 'by birth, by distant parentage, and by predilection. My immediate ancestors lived in Piedmont, our family is French, as our name once was; but it has been Italianised, as the custom there is. I believe we could compete with Miss Tredethlyn herself, in point of antiquity of race and the vicissitudes of our family fortunes.'

'You must tell Mr. Vaughan about it all, Gemma. He is enthusiastic about things of the kind, as enthusiastic as papa and I, and far better informed, papa says. Only think, Mr. Vaughan, Gemma's family was of old nobility in France, in the days of the Valois, and lost all in the cause of Queen Mary.'

'A good cause, a good cause! I honour their memory, and hold such a family tradition as a great treasure,' said Mr. Vaughan.

Gemma smiled. 'So do I,' she replied; 'but it is unsubstantial, and, unhappily, the only one belonging to us. We are French, as I said before, and our name is De Valmont. Ages ago, when Henri II. was King of France, and the Queen of Scotland was betrothed to the Dauphin, the Comte de Valmont was one of the gentlemen-in-waiting to the young prince. He was an odd sort of man, and though young and handsome, and in high favour, he suddenly left the court and the world, and went into a monastery—I don't know

where—and there was an end of him. He left almost all his wealth to his younger brother, the Chevalier de Valmont; and he, too, disappeared, but not, so far as was known or surmised, into a monastery. The brothers had an uncle, with whom their father had quarrelled, and whom they did not know. He lived in Gascony, when he was not following a soldier's fortune, and my father is descended from him. This Claude de Valmont was in the service of Philibert of Savoy after the peace, and finally settled in Piedmont, but not until he had endeavoured to trace the fate of his nephews, to whose property he would have been entitled. It was owing to these efforts, and the powerful motive which prompted them, that so much of the history of our family in those old, old times was preserved, though they don't seem so very old either, in this castle, and among so many relics of them. Louis de Valmont fell into disgrace at the court, after his brother quitted it, in consequence of his devotion to the Queen of Scotland. When she went, so reluctantly, to the black northern kingdom, the young man made part of her suite; and when he, with her other friends and would-be protectors returned to France, he never ceased to urge her cause. Vainly, however, and everything went ill with her. Not long after the truth of her rigorous imprisonment in England reached France, the Chevalier de Valmont left Paris, having, it was supposed, turned the greater part of his wealth into jewels—it was certain that he had purchased a large quantity—and travelled to Bordeaux. There he took ship on board a trading-vessel, and he was never again heard of. Claude de Valmont claimed and received any remnant of the wealth of the Che-

valier which could be realised; and the *procès* was preserved among the family records. Whether the Chevalier went to England to conspire in the Queen's cause, and fell a victim to his enterprise, or whether he perished at sea, was never known. The old castle in Piedmont in which my father's ancestors were born contained, until lately, a painting which the Chevalier's uncle brought from the Hôtel de Valmont in Paris, and which my father prized beyond anything in his possession.'

'Prized!' said Mr. Vaughan, who had listened with deep interest to Gemma's story. 'Is it, then, his no longer?'

'He has been obliged to part with it. His circumstances are not good, and a large price was offered to him for the painting by an agent of the English Government. Just as he was painfully making up his mind to take the offer, a friend made him a still more liberal proposal.'

Gemma looked at Blanche and smiled, and Miss Tredethlyn returned the smile, while a faint flush of pleasure suffused her pale cheek.

Mr. Vaughan interpreted the looks.

'The picture is yours, Miss Tredethlyn,' he said.

'It is my father's, Mr. Vaughan. You will soon be able to tell us what you think of the painting, which will delight you, I am sure, because it is in keeping with all your pet antiquities about the castle. It is the marriage of the Queen of Scots with the Dauphin François; and the tradition in Gemma's family is that the young pair sat, or rather stood, for the portraits, so that they are fact, not fancy. I am so glad to think it is to be here; the castle will seem more like home to Gemma when she sees the painting before her eyes.'

'Is it not yet unpacked?'

'No. My father is going to have it hung in the picture-gallery; but it is in London now, being restored and reframed. I fear it will not arrive in time for my birthday. There are to be wonderful doings then, you know, and I am to be made ever so much of. Papa is so busy about it all, he can think of nothing else; and Gemma and I are to have *carte blanche* for our dresses, and we really don't know what to do with it.'

'I am afraid I cannot advise you,' said Mr. Vaughan.

Gemma had moved away from the others, and was looking out of a window, standing in one of her habitually graceful attitudes. Blanche whispered to her companion:

'I wish she could be in my place, though I should not quite like to be in hers.'

'And wherein is she more fitted for yours?'

'Because she is so beautiful, so graceful, so self-possessed. I suppose it's wrong, Mr. Vaughan; but I can't help believing in destiny, and it seems to me she is born for all kinds of good fortune, and I for all kinds of failure. Hush! I know you are going to scold me; but you need not indeed. I know how foolish this is, and that any other person might think me low-minded, envious, even jealous of Gemma's beauty and fascination. But you will not; you understand me.'

'I understand you perfectly, Miss Tredethlyn.'

'Have you no more treasures to show us in this part of the castle?' said Gemma, coming towards them again; 'no more carved oak, or wrought silver, or tapestry, or anything?'

'No more,' said Mr. Vaughan. 'There are some other curious

things—old manuscripts, books of hours, and so forth; but they are in the library, and you know them all.'

'I hope all these things are not heirlooms,' said Gemma. 'Nobody would ever care so much about them as Blanche. It is bad enough to think of the dear old castle going into other hands.'

'No,' said Blanche. 'Papa has told me that those things are all to be mine. I must build a house, I suppose, at that beautiful place he has bought in Ireland. So like papa—was it not?—to select the remotest place he could hear of, and set up a museum of antiquities. There is a beautiful ruin there already, papa tells me. What is the name of the place?'

'Kilferran Abbey,' replied Mr. Vaughan. 'It was a Dominican monastery once, and the whole district suffered much in former and later penal days. But it is even more secluded, I fancy, than Tredethlyn. I don't think you will ever live there.'

'Oh, yes, I shall,' returned Blanche. 'Gemma and I will go and live there whenever I must see Tredethlyn pass into other hands. Papa talks of our going to see the place next year.'

The preparations for the celebration of Miss Tredethlyn's birthday were made on a scale of great splendour. The *fête* was to be a double discharge of social obligations—the first large entertainment given by Sir Bernard, and the formal induction of his daughter into her place at the head of his household. The castle was full of guests, and the accommodation afforded by two neighbouring inns, though of a humble kind, was secured by Sir Bernard for several of the bachelor members of the party.

The day came, and the guests assembled in good time for the

splendid dinner with which the festivities were to commence. Dressing-rooms were occupied; ladies'-maids tripped to and fro, taking notes of *toilettes* for the warning or encouragement of their respective ladies; a pleasant air of bustle and anticipated pleasure spread itself over the house. Miss Tredethlyn was as yet invisible. She had been summoned to her father's private sitting-room, where she found him, attended by Mr. Vaughan and a grave and business-like personage; before whom lay some very important-looking documents. Sir Bernard had summoned his daughter by a line of writing, which directed her to come to him *alone*, and she was therefore unaccompanied by Gemma. Her father and the other two gentlemen rose to receive her, and she faltered for a moment, daunted a little by a certain solemnity in the scene.

Blanche Tredethlyn had never looked so well. Her dress, pure white, of very simple form but rich material, suited her slender figure, and harmonised with the refined lines and thoughtful cast of her face; which the joyful agitation of the moment had caused to flush becomingly.

'This is Mr. Maldon, Blanche,' said Sir Bernard, taking her hand and leading her to the table, 'who has brought me the papers relative to the purchase of Kilferran, and those by which I confer it on you. It is yours from this day, my dear.'

Blanche said nothing, but clung to her father, with tears gathering thickly in her eyes.

'Don't cry, you silly child, or Mr. Maldon will think you very unfit to manage your property—he wants to consult *you* about it to-morrow. And now,' he took a box from the table, 'I am going to give you your real birthday present.'

Sir Bernard opened the box, and displayed, resting on a bed of green velvet, a string of magnificent pearls, lustrous, sheeny, soft, and exquisitely shaped. Blanche uttered an exclamation of delight.

'Oh, papa, I never saw such pearls!'

'They are very fine, my dear, the finest I could get. But how do you like the pendant?' He lifted the necklace from its case, and hung it over her hand. The pendant was a remarkable jewel, of a fashion which Blanche had never seen. *It was a fair balas-ruby, clear, smooth, and red, heart-shaped, and laid upon it, with a well-feigned carelessness, was one softly white pearl.* The girl gazed at the superb jewel, speechless with admiration and delight. The first words she spoke were:

'It must have cost a fortune.'

'Not to me,' said her father. 'That jewel, Blanche, is one of the ancient treasures of Tredethlyn, but it is not an heirloom, and I have always meant that on this day it should be yours.'

'Was it—was it mamma's?' asked Blanche in an agitated voice.

'No, my child. You will be the first who has ever worn it since it came out of the sea. Mr. Vaughan did not tell you the story, because I wished you to see the jewel to-day for the first time. A hundred and fifty years ago, on a night of tremendous tempest, a huge mass of the cliff beyond the sea front of Tredethlyn fell, and when the sea calmed, and adventurous boatmen explored the new face of the coast, they found the entrance to an immense cave, whose existence had never been suspected, laid bare. Craggy rocks hollowed into caverns formed its sides, and in their crevices, among wisps of seaweed, shells,

and all the *débris* of the sea, were found strange, ghastly relics of shipwreck and ruin. Many a skeleton could have been formed of the scattered bones; and of the more durable objects, such as metals, some remained in comparative preservation. It was a favourite and dangerous pursuit for some time to explore the crevices of the cave at low water. The people called it the Spaniard's cave, because they found there the remains of a ship's carved figure-head of a Spanish fashion. There was a ready market at Tredethlyn for such waifs as they chose to sell to Sir Hugh, and they were for the most part quite worthless. One of the things they brought to the castle was a small but very strong chain, formed of iron links, crusted thick with rust, but not decayed, to which a small iron purse was attached. The thing looked, when I saw it first, now thirty years ago, like a lump of rusty metal, nothing more. No one thought about it, I presume, or, if any one had any surmise, took it for an amulet or a reliquary; at all events it lay in Sir Hugh's time, and in Sir Dennis's, and in the time of all the Tredethlyns since, unnoticed, in the cabinet of shells, and stones, and mineral specimens which you have seen in the library, until a short time ago, when Mr. Vaughan and I, in re-arranging the cabinet, found the piece of rusty chain, and set to work to clean it. In doing so, we wrenched some links asunder, and found what we thought was a pebble which had been imbedded in an interstice of the chain. Imagine our astonishment when we dislodged, from a coating of rust and dirt, the splendid gem which—here Sir Bernard fastened the pearls on Blanche's neck—'becomes you so well now.'

'Just the same as it is?' asked Blanche in amazement.

'Just the same, except that it has been in the hands of a clever jeweller, who has furnished it up. By-the-way, Vaughan, Jacobson was mightily puzzled by my balas-ruby, and very curious about its origin. He says there is no such design known to the jewel-workers now.'

'I daresay not. I wish we could know its history; it is like one of the sentimental, emblematical, romantic jewels of Queen Elizabeth's time, of which one finds entries in the old records.'

While her father and Mr. Vaughan were speaking, Blanche stood, thoughtfully looking down on the jewel upon her breast.

'Gemma will wonder at it,' she said; 'and she and I will make many a story out of our own imagination about the hands it passed through. How long ago is it, papa, since the ship was lost, do you think, and the lady who wore this ruby drowned?'

'God only knows, my darling. We can't tell whether it came out of a lost ship, though it is most probable, or whether a man or woman wore and lost it. It may have made part of a jeweller's cargo, you know.'

'What! carefully inclosed in an iron purse? No, no. A lady wore it, and she was handsome and grand! Thank you, papa, a thousand times, for your beautiful, beautiful present—and Gemma and I will make up our minds about the story of the lady, and tell it to you, when you've time to listen.'

CHAPTER V.

BLANCHE.

The birthday festival was a brilliant affair; Sir Bernard had the gratification of seeing that his

daughter took her place with all the traditional grace and propriety of a Tredethlyn, and that the *entente cordiale* which his long absence might have endangered subsisted intact between him and his neighbours. Next to Miss Tredethlyn, who naturally commanded the chief share of the general attention, her friend Gemma di Valdimonte was the observed of all observers, to which her novelty contributed no less than her beauty. The richness and taste of her dress, the elegance of her figure, and the ease and grace of her dancing were popular themes, especially among the young men, while there was no small curiosity among the elder ladies concerning this beautiful foreigner. That she was Miss Tredethlyn's 'companion' was a notion to be flouted with scorn; she was much too handsome, too 'superior,' for that kind of thing, and it was known that she was highly born. No, this brilliant girl was the bosom friend of Miss Tredethlyn, who was of a romantic turn—romance was in vogue forty years ago—and the perfect attachment between them was highly interesting; especially as her friend was so much handsomer than Miss Tredethlyn. Sir Bernard would perhaps have been mortified if he had heard, among the groups in his stately saloons, such frequent remarks on this disparity, and if he had known that for one approving comment made on Blanche's appearance, a score were devoted to her jewels.

The fame of the splendid necklace and its pendant spread quickly through the rooms. The story of the ruby heart had been told with great success, at dinner, by Mr. Vaughan, and afterwards Blanche had handed the jewel round for inspection. As Gemma clasped the chain of pearls around her neck again she whispered:

'I have seen a jewel like that before.'

'Have you, Gemma? Where?'

'I will tell you another time, or rather I will show you.'

There was no more opportunity for the girls to talk just then, each was swept away into the crowd of dancers; but many times Blanche caught Gemma's smile of meaning, and it added a new and delightful mystery to the romances which her brain was weaving, even in that busy scene, about the former story of the ruby heart bearing the tear of pearl. And when the ball had concluded, and the guests had retired, when Blanche had been kissed and complimented by her father, and she and Gemma were alone again, she recurred to the subject. But Gemma put it off laughingly.

'You are too curious,' she said, 'and I am determined to administer a moral lesson to you, by not gratifying your inquisitiveness until I choose. I shan't tell you where I saw a jewel like that, until—until—you must wait even to know until when.'

Blanche submitted to the playful imperiousness of her friend, and laying the necklace by, they began to talk about the ball.

'What a number of strange faces,' said Blanche, 'and yet of familiar names; I know every one in the room almost, except the officers, by name, and no one in reality. Did you enjoy it very much, Gemma? Which of your partners did you like best?'

'I enjoyed it very much,' said Gemma, 'and I liked Captain Ramsay best. He was much the handsomest man in the room.'

'You danced with him early in the night, I think?'

'Yes, and late too. He bespoke the last dance. Which of your partners did you like best?'

'I don't know,' said Blanche

Tredethlyn, but as she uttered the words she blushed deeply, for she knew her answer was not the truth.

Captain Ruthven Ramsay was one of the bachelor guests of Sir Bernard for whom quarters had been secured at an inn. He was only a captain in a line regiment, with very little to live on beside his pay, and being the younger son of a family as notoriously poor as it was undeniably distinguished, had no particular expectations. He was indeed about the last on the 'young men' list of that season, on whom the fashionable mothers of society would have looked with favour. But the same could by no means be said of their daughters. The teachings and warnings of fashion must needs have been very deeply and effectually impressed upon any girl, her impulses have been utterly kept down indeed, and her mind very thoroughly perverted, if she did not feel that Ruthven Ramsay was not a man of an everyday kind, but one whose life was lived on a higher level than that of his fellows in general. Certain famous lines about 'preaching down a daughter's heart' had not been written in those days, but the thing was done, perhaps more easily than now, when daughters are little disposed to bear preaching of any sort; and many a domestic homily had been administered on the poverty of the Ramsays, the utter impossibility of the Sir Lewis Ramsay *in esse* or the Sir Alexander Ramsay *in posse* 'doing anything' for Captain Ruthven, and thence the unprincipled folly of which Captain Ruthven would be guilty if he should attempt to marry otherwise than for money. Hitherto Captain Ruthven Ramsay had not offered any temptation to such wicked disobedience on the part of the fair students of expediency; he had

never been seriously spoken of as the admirer of any one, and to his already considerable claims to female admiration there had gradually been added that of reputed indifference, even invulnerability.

But in truth Ruthven Ramsay was neither invulnerable nor indifferent; he was only scrupulously honourable, and excessively fastidious. No fortune with which a woman was ever dowered would have induced him to marry without love, but, on the other hand, no love which a woman ever inspired would have induced him to accept all from her. So that he was accustomed to regard himself as an 'outsider'—one to whom the prize matrimonial was never to be adjudged.

The very refinement of taste, manners, and habits which he knew would be indispensable to any woman's inspiring him with love, rendered it more than improbable that he should find the one woman whom he must love out of the rank and condition of life in which wealth is as general as it is certainly indispensable; and he was rather glad to find that at twenty-eight he had not been obliged to fly from an agonizing temptation, or induced to fail in his allegiance to his immutable code of honour. He had never seen any one whom he could have loved, had she been ever so romantically and accommodatingly poor; and he was beginning to think his lot might not be so hard a one, after all. It was only forty years ago; but men did then actually regard marriage with partiality, and the being debarred from it as a penalty. When Ruthven Ramsay, part of whose regiment was quartered in Cornwall, entered the ball-room at Tredethlyn Castle he was heart whole and fancy free.

Gemma had been correct in say-

ing that he was the handsomest man in the room. It befell Ruthven Ramsay almost always to be so, and to produce so much effect by his presence, that people in general were very much surprised to find that he had anything but good looks to recommend him; for though lady novelists had not then made masculine ugliness heroic, there already existed a notion that male beauty and boobyism were usually coincident. He was not remarkably tall, but his figure combined strength, symmetry, and elegance; and his face, with its dark-blue eyes, features fine and delicate, but peculiarly instinct with manliness; his noble head, with its closely-curling masses of lustrous chestnut-brown hair, were of quite typical beauty.

He was some time in the ball-room before he attempted to penetrate the crowd surrounding Miss Tredethlyn, but waited patiently, his turn for an introduction, looking about him in the meanwhile, and admiring the pretty, fresh complexions and animated manners of many a 'county' belle, to whom 'the season' was utterly unknown, and the mere possibility of ever getting enough of balls incredible. Thus, amid the shifting of the crowd, he caught occasional glimpses of a face so beautiful, so bright, so full of youthful pleasure, and yet of delicate and refined sensibility—with eyes dark, proud, brilliant, and yet tender—a face in which intellect, feeling, cultivation, and race had cunningly blended their expression into such beauty as he had never before seen. People came and went, intervening between him and the figure, girlish indeed, but stately and statuesque, at which he earnestly gazed. She only did not change her place. Presently a gap occurred in the crowd, and Ruthven Ramsay, with his sponsor, a Cornish squire, by

his side, took advantage of it to be introduced to Miss Tredethlyn.

'Now we shall have a look at the wonderful necklace Lady Merthyr has been talking about,' said Sir Merthyr Merthyr. But Ruthven Ramsay made his bow to Miss Tredethlyn, asked for a dance, and fell back into the crowd, with only the vaguest notion of what Miss Tredethlyn was like, and without having seen the wonderful necklace. He had been looking at Gemma de Valdimonte's wonderful eyes.

Blanche Tredethlyn's eighteenth birthday formed an epoch in her life in other than the conventional sense. The first of the guests at the ball to present himself afterwards at the castle was Ruthven Ramsay, and she heard his name announced with a strange, hitherto unknown feeling, as if something extraordinary had occurred to her.

There is no need to elaborate this portion of Blanche Tredethlyn's story—only the 'old, old story,' after all.

The old castle of Tredethlyn was always picturesque and beautiful, but peculiarly so in the glorious summer weather which set in after Blanche's birthday festival, when sunshine was upon sea and shore, upon ivy-grown turret and smooth bowling-green, upon 'pleasant alleys,' and smiling, many-coloured gardens. It was an enchanted time to Blanche Tredethlyn, and not to her alone. Captain Ruthven Ramsay and his friends were still in the vicinity; but he had forsaken the inn, and was staying at Merthyr with his sponsorial friend. Day after day found the young officer, to whom Sir Bernard had taken a decided liking, at the castle, in pleasant, idle attendance upon the ladies. The first distinct idea concerning Miss Tredethlyn which Ruthven Ramsay was conscious of entertaining was the sense of her

inferiority to the peerless Gemma; and though, on better acquaintance with her, he did full justice to the young lady's good gifts of intellect and disposition, it never occurred to him to think of her in any light but that of Gemma's friend, who perhaps might be induced to be his also. When she had given him her whole heart, when every hope and thought, every wish and fancy of hers were met in him, though she had no true and real knowledge of how entirely she loved him, Ruthven Ramsay could not have told the colour of Miss Tredethlyn's eyes or remembered how she wore her hair.

Captain Ramsay learned very quickly all about the beautiful girl who had first made him feel that it would be a very difficult thing to adhere to his undeviating rule with regard to women. This high-born, portionless girl was not to be thought of as possibly his wife; he could have no right to try and win her—her with, doubtless, such a future before her, such sovereign right as hers to all that some happier and richer man than he should give. But it was not easy to refrain from thinking of Gemma, and Captain Ramsay speedily left off trying. He saw her frequently; the old-world courtesy and hospitality of Sir Bernard gave him as many opportunities as even the most ardent admirer, if he had any claim to keep within the bounds of reason, could desire. He had leave for some weeks from his regiment, and there was no equivocal warmth or eagerness in the reception he met with almost daily from the young ladies at the castle. It would have been easy to surmise that Blanche had no mother to watch over her with the vigilance of love, and no hired chaperon to surround her with the precautions of interest, or the disaster of an unrequited attachment

could hardly have befallen the young lady of Tredethlyn.

In about three weeks after the birthday festival, and when the early summer was exquisitely beautiful, the painting which Sir Bernard had purchased from Gemma's father reached Tredethlyn, and was hung in the picture-gallery. Miss Tredethlyn and her friend had been out, passing the sunny hours upon the shore, and there Sir Merthyr and Lady Merthyr and Captain Ruthven Ramsay had joined them. Until this day Blanche had not taken herself to task for the feelings which she neither attempted to define nor to govern: she had permitted her young heart to bask in the sunshine of its first love. But now, as she walked towards her stately home, with Ruthven at her side, his head bent over her, and his dark blue eyes looking at her with even more than their usual gentleness, his manner full of the high-bred deference which is so charming to women, his voice modulated to tones in which dwelt all music to the young girl's ears, she did not palter with or deceive herself longer. She loved him, and her dearest hope, her delicious, timid belief, was that he loved her. She was so exquisitely happy! Surely the world must be a good and glorious place, and human life a splendid, an inestimable boon, when such a being as Ruthven dwelt in the one, and such feelings as hers were permitted to irradiate the other! So absorbed was she, that she hardly noticed the pre-occupation of Gemma, and was like one awakened from a dream, scarcely able to recognise surrounding objects, when her friend said to her:

'Blanche, you have been very good to wait so patiently, and ask me no questions. But you are going to be rewarded. I am going to tell you the grand secret.'

'Grand secret!' said Blanche, blushing and stammering. 'I don't think I know what you mean.'

'Oh, then you've forgotten! And you don't care to know where I saw a jewel like your ruby heart?'

'Of course—I remember now, and I do care to know—only—only I seem to have so much more to think of now, that things escape me somehow.'

'Never mind. You shall hear the secret all the same as if you had been trying all sorts of devices to find it out; but on one condition—you must wear the ruby heart at dinner.'

'When there's so small a party, Gemma?'

'Yes—never mind the smallness of the party; everybody there will think everything you do right, you know. Stay—you are nearly dressed—I will put it on your neck now.'

The gem touched Blanche's soft, warm neck coldly, and she started slightly under Gemma's hands.

After dinner Sir Bernard pro-

posed a general adjournment to the picture-gallery, in order that his guests might inspect his latest acquisition.

When an admiring group had gathered round the painting, Gemma came softly to Blanche's side and pressed her white slender arm.

'Now for the secret,' she whispered. 'Look on the right of the picture, at the figure of the Dauphin.'

'Yes, I am looking.'

'Now look on the left, at the figure of the Queen of Scots.'

'Yes, I am looking.'

'Do you see any similarity in their ornaments? Here is the glass—observe the white satin shoulder-knot worn by each as a bridal favour. What is the jewel in the centre?'

Blanche looked intently, and then the arm which held the glass dropped at her side, and she turned, looking very pale, to the smiling gaze of Gemma, as she answered,

'It is a ruby heart with a pearl.'

(To be continued.)



SOCIAL SUBJECTS.

MR. HOPGOOD'S SCHEME FOR DISESTABLISHMENT—THE ARCHBISHOPS' LITTLE BILL—MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

REALLY one cannot help asking, with considerable curiosity, what will be the ultimate fate of the Church of England—looking forward no farther than ten years, that is? A great Roman controversialist once said that the Papacy must be a Divine institution, otherwise it could not have survived the vices of some of the mediæval popes; and one may reasonably think that there is something superhuman about a society which was once tainted with the grossness and superstitious character of the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries, passed under the yoke of a Henry VIII., was reformed by a feeble king and a contemptible archbishop, was domineered over by an Elizabeth, was petted by a monarch like Charles I., was for a time overwhelmed by a Cromwell, was restored to life by a Charles II., and has existed all through the Georgian era, and is now more intelligent, more comprehensive, more earnest, more real than any other church in Christendom, though it has nourished in its bosom minds that in their maturer power have utterly disowned its authority, scouted its dogmas, and reproached it as an ecclesiastical system wholly unfit to exist in this sceptical and enlightened age. In the April Number of 'London Society,' I ventured to criticise a writer in 'Temple Bar,' who, with some humour, but little practical common sense, sketched very faintly his ideal of a national church. I now turn to the notions which Mr. James Hopgood has ventilated in the May Number of 'The Contemporary Review,' dealing

with a 'Scheme for the gradual Disestablishment of the Church of England.' I have not sufficient space at my disposal to follow Mr. Hopgood in minute details; I will content myself with reviewing him on two or three points.

He commences by saying:—'To those who have given thought to the matter, it will not appear an extravagance to assert unhesitatingly that the relations of the Established Church to the various nonconforming religious bodies in England and Wales must shortly undergo an entire revision. The Nonconformists, constituting as they do a clear majority, will not, and ought not, to be contented with anything less than absolute religious equality.' Now, I am not aware that there is any proof beyond Mr. Hopgood's word that Nonconformists do constitute a clear majority, and nothing but the accurate results of a fair and intelligent poll can prove his statement. I am inclined to think, that if an honest religious census were taken, Mr. Hopgood would perhaps find that his majority is not so clear after all. But as to religious equality, have the Nonconformists anything left to desire? It is true that some four and twenty bishops have seats in the House of Lords as spiritual peers, but then Nonconformist ministers are eligible for seats in the House of Commons, which Anglican clergymen are debarred from gaining by reason of their status; and therefore we may fairly say, that while the representatives of the Church are limited to a very insignificant number in Parliament, the representatives of the Nonconformists are not so

limited; and if it be true that Nonconformists constitute a clear majority of the nation, it is obvious that they possess greater political powers, and in that respect they have no reason to complain of any absence of just equality. On the contrary, the Church may complain that it is not fair that the second order of the clergy, most of whom are men of superior education and intelligence, should be arbitrarily deprived of an inherent right of citizenship. And in other respects Nonconformists have a distinct advantage over the Church. The Church is incapable of enacting a canon or framing a rubric without the intervention of the Legislature, and must positively ask the consent of a large number of Nonconformists before it can move a finger towards its own internal regulation. Nonconformists, on the other hand, are entirely free to legislate for themselves, without even asking the opinion of an external body. So far, it is undeniably the Church that has the most right to complain of the absence of religious equality. If Mr. Hopgood really means that the Church enjoys a higher social position, it is hard to see how it could be desirable that such a position should be lowered; for it can scarcely be for the interest of the community at large that a considerable section of it should be placed in a lower sphere by legislative enactment; this would be contrary to the true principles of policy, and nobody but a religious fanatic would desire it. It has been said that no Dissenting family keeps a carriage for more than a generation; this means that as Dissenters advance in social position they generally become absorbed in the Church; and if this is so it is surely not the fault of the

Church, but of Nonconformity. And there is a certain statistical inquiry which Mr. Hopgood would do well to make, and it is this: Which gains every year most converts from the other—the Church or Dissent? I am disposed to think that if accurate information could be gained, the advantage would not be found to be in favour of Dissent. But this inequality, again, cannot be made a count in the indictment against the Church.

I now come to the following proposition: 'All cathedrals and, so-called, Church property belong to the State, and may and ought to be dealt with according to the exigencies of the living race of men, whatever may have been the views and wishes of men or women of former ages.' In a sense this is, no doubt, a true statement; but only in a limited sense. Every kind of property belongs to the State, inasmuch as the State has the power to appropriate it to such uses as it may think fit. Mr. Hopgood may own an estate, and the State has power to alienate a considerable portion of it for public purposes whether Mr. Hopgood approves or not, but it does not follow from this that Mr. Hopgood's property *belongs* to the State. Henry VIII. handed over a considerable amount of Church property to his favourites; he had the power to do so, but it is a very vexed question as to whether such property *belonged* to him: will Mr. Hopgood venture to affirm that it did so belong? But he says that cathedrals, &c., ought to be dealt with according to the exigencies of the living race of men. This is entirely a separate question from that of property, and I am willing to agree herein with Mr. Hopgood; but if I reply to him that they *are* so dealt with, and satisfy the exigencies of the

living race of men, it becomes a mere matter of opinion as to which of us holds the correct view, and there is no necessity to ask Parliament to adjudicate between us. The Church is in possession of the cathedrals, and pleads a title of many centuries, and it will require a much stronger case than Mr. Hopgood suggests to eject it. Nonconformity is a thing of yesterday—the Church of England goes back beyond Magna Charta.

There is another proposition that I must mention: 'Every parish church is a building erected within a certain district for the worship of Almighty God for the convenience and benefit of those dwelling within such district; it belongs to no special sect or body of Christians—it is, in fact, the church of the parish.' Just let us examine this statement, for it is a crucial one.

It is quite true that the parish church has been erected within a certain district for the worship of Almighty God; but who erected it, and who dedicated it? Laymen of the Church have built it, and bishops of the Church have consecrated it to certain specific uses; and it is absolutely false to say that it belongs to no special body of Christians. The parish church belongs to the Church people quite as much as 'Little Bethel' or 'Mount Zion' belongs to the Baptists or Independents, with whose money such edifices were erected. Mr. Hopgood entirely ignores the fact that Nonconformists, by their deliberate secession from the Church, have, in equity, forfeited all claim to the parochial edifice. He evidently thinks that Nonconformists can eat their cake and have it. If his argument is good for anything, it maintains that all buildings set apart for the worship of Almighty God are public property. One is not more sacred

than another; and the Roman Catholic cathedral and the Wesleyan meeting-house have no equitable claim to be exempted from the practical results of his theory. Mr. Hopgood may say these buildings are private property; but so are the churches of the Establishment, for the patrons of livings, from the Crown downwards, are all, in a manner, trustees. And if the deanery of a cathedral is to be extinguished in the way that Mr. Hopgood proposes, I see no reason why his argument should not be applied to St. George's, Southwark, or to Mr. Spurgeon's tabernacle. What is sauce for the Establishmentarian goose is equally sauce for the Nonconformist gander.

I pass on to Mr. Hopgood's most delightful vision. He says: 'I have assumed as a fundamental principle that the parish church belongs to no sect or special religious body, and that it ought to be open for the worship of God to all dwellers in its district, under reasonable regulations. If any body of men feel conscientious objections to worship in a building in which others worship, they will of course, attending to their conscience, abstain, and provide a building for themselves; but the parish church must be open to all, care being taken that no sect or denomination shall have power to erect any altar, or put up any ornament therein, or do any other act which may reasonably interfere with the religious convictions, feelings, sentiments, or even prejudices of any other worshipper.' And he goes on to propose, 'That as soon as a parish church shall become vacant by reason of the death of the present incumbent, a parish church board shall be elected by the parishioners, . . . which board shall have the entire control of the church, and shall

appropriate it for the religious services of the parishioners, so as that all religious denominations in the parish having a certain number of members (say twenty-five) shall have the use of it at stated times, arranged so as to meet, as far as possible, the convenience of all, regard being had to the relative importance of each religious denomination from a numerical point of view—the most important body (in numbers) having its convenience first studied, but so that each denomination shall be fairly treated.'

What a charming prospect of parochial peace and quiet this proposition opens up! Imagine a parish of four thousand inhabitants, among whom some ten or fifteen different sects of Christianity are clearly represented. At least ten sects would have a representative upon the parish church board, and how nicely they would all get on together! Let us see how it would work. In such a parish there would probably be a thousand nominal members of the Church of England. These would insist upon having the use of the building from eleven till one, and would probably demand also an hour from eight A.M. till nine also. Fifty Roman Catholics would want the church from nine till ten for mass; and the English Church people and the Roman Catholics would insist upon the introduction of an altar. But the Wesleyans, Baptists, Primitive Methodists, Independents, Old Connection, Lady Huntingdon's Connection, Peculiar People, Unitarians, Particular Baptists, Free Church of England, Irvingites, Moravians—God knows who else—would all want the church in the morning. And they all would cry, 'Down with Hopwood!' if they could not get exactly what they wanted. Indeed, the scheme has only to be detailed to show what sublime nonsense it is. It is ut-

terly and hopelessly impracticable, and no man who is thoroughly in earnest about his religion would wish it otherwise. If you could persuade all sects to worship under the same roof, and to make reasonable allowances for each other, there might be good hope for those who indulge in the dream of the unity of Christendom. As it is, I can only class Mr. Hopgood among those amiable people who decline to look rough facts in the face, and who prefer to imagine that all paths are smooth.

If the Church is to be disestablished, it will not be from any public love of the discordant voices of nonconforming sectaries, but because the free growth of opinion within the Church will have paralysed her united action. Party feeling now runs strongly enough, and through all these Ritualistic troubles not one bishop has risen equal to the occasion, and been capable of proposing a statesmanlike policy. The two archbishops are very excellent persons, no doubt; but they are men of mediocre talents, and they have exhibited no capacity for directing important crises. In short, I am much inclined to think that when the bishops find themselves politely excluded from the House of Lords they will have nobody but themselves to blame. The one object of their lives appears to be to repress earnestness and to encourage apathy; and in these days such a policy does not command much sympathy.

There is, however, another aspect of ecclesiastical affairs which seems to require some notice, and follows naturally after the consideration of Mr. Hopgood's ingenious theories. Need I say that I allude to what is now notorious as 'The Archbishops' Bill'? The most reverend gentlemen who preside over the

sees of Canterbury and York have the credit of believing immensely in law. Certainly they are decidedly fathers-in-law to the Church, if one may hazard the echo of a jest in dealing with such eminent personages; for both Dr. Tait and Dr. Thompson appear to be convinced that the best way of making people all of one mind in their religious convictions is to give them cheap and easy methods of prosecuting in quasi-ecclesiastical courts those who have the misfortune to hold different opinions. It is quite true that their Graces profess to aim only at external ceremonial; but their speeches in Parliament show with tolerable clearness that their ultimate object is to strike at that right of private judgment which is claimed as the inalienable heritage of the British Protestant; for there is something absolutely foolish about the notion that it is possible in these days to secure a rigid uniformity of conducting Divine worship in that mixed society which goes to make up the Church of England. And on no reasonable grounds whatever can such a uniformity be argued for as desirable. Every educated and travelled person knows perfectly well that even in the severely-uniform Roman ritual there is a wide difference between the simple low mass of the country parish church and the intricate pontifical ceremonial which may be witnessed at the celebration of the same office in a cathedral in a large town. In such matters there must of necessity be a maximum and a minimum. And now that a more ornate method of conducting Divine service has so decidedly obtained amongst us, and has undeniably found so much support and favour from the laity, it is folly to suppose that what may fairly be called a matter of taste can be put down because three or four of those people called parishioners—individuals, that is,

who pay certain rates and taxes—are of opinion that ornate ceremonial is not conducive to edification. If the Archbishop of Canterbury had laid before Parliament the proposition, that if three-fourths of an ordinary congregation prefer the minimum of ceremonial to the maximum, their wishes ought to be complied with, he would probably have carried the sense of the country with him. But when it is remembered that every person residing in a parish is a parishioner from a legal point of view, whether he be a Papist or a Peculiar Person, it is really nonsense to say that any individual, or three such, has, or have, a right to interfere with the regular worshippers in a parish church, or to harass a clergyman whose ministrations he, or they, never attend or seek. By a curious legal inconsistency a Roman Catholic landlord cannot exercise his rights of presentation to livings—they lapse to either of the Universities; while a Wesleyan or Quaker landlord is not debarred from the advantages of Church patronage which he may purchase or inherit. And it certainly is most desirable that the law on this point should be equitably adjusted by statutable enactment; and it is equally desirable that the parochial fiction should be annihilated, and that the nebulous theories of dilettanti theologians of Mr. Hopgood's school should be dissipated by an invigorating blast of common sense.

Those who are able to regard coolly the position recently assumed by the two archbishops must be struck by the extraordinary blunder that these gentlemen have made. Both of them are popularly regarded far more as men of the world than as spiritual persons, and everybody, except, perhaps, the not very wise ecclesiastic who does the Church business in the 'Times,' marvels

that they should father a measure which, if it becomes law, must ultimately tend to make archbishops a little lower than the angels than they are at present. The 'Spectator' truly described Dr. Tait's Public Worship Regulation Bill as a Bill for the Disestablishment of the Church of England; for such it certainly is. Any such legislation as is proposed would make the position of our Anglican clergymen absolutely intolerable. Hitherto it has been the not unworthy boast of the English Church that it possesses the best-educated clergy in Christendom, and that its ministers are men of the highest social standing—gentlemen in every sense of the word—men who enter upon their sacred functions without any thought of pecuniary advantages, or from the base motive of raising themselves in society—men who are brought up in constant intercourse with the world, and who by their training and habits are far removed from that curse of caste which places so wide a gulf between the clergy and the laity in Roman Catholic countries; and it would be a most disastrous thing if those conditions should now be limited. But if the archbishops are allowed to get their way, and place every educated gentleman who receives Holy Orders at the mercy of ignorant and fanatical blockheads who are to be allowed to harass and worry him in his efforts to do his duty, it is much to be feared that the office of the ministry will henceforth be recruited from the ranks of less scrupulous persons, and that the English clergy will soon be men of the same stamp as those Irish priests whose conduct in political warfare has recently been so universally condemned.

One of the most distinguished of living statesmen is reported to have said in the course of a casual

discussion on this very Bill of Archbishop Tait's, 'The Church, as a profession, is gone. No man of talent and education will enter a sphere where, according to modern habits, he cannot earn a decent livelihood, and where he has to submit to so many indignities.' It is probable that this language is somewhat overstrained, but there is a most serious amount of truth in it; and those to whom, humanly speaking, the future of this great Church of England is entrusted will do well to consider earnestly this bitter forecast of her fate. All liberal-minded men who are strongly convinced that there is no real antagonism between science and religion could not watch the decadence of the broad and sober English church without a sigh, for they believe that, if Christendom is ever to be united in this reasoning age, the reunion must be effected by that world-wide community which holds out one hand to Catholicism and the other to Protestantism, and provides the point where the extremes may meet without that violent collision which threatens extermination to both. When will controversialists learn to admit that the great problems of Death and Immortality can never be anything but the speculations of teeming brains, and that no demonstration of their absolute truth or falsehood can be attained upon this side the grave? When will contending factions learn, too, that the solution of these problems depends not upon those keen and angry jealousies which render Christianity almost an object of contempt?

'Man, proud man,
Clothed with a little brief authority,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high
heaven

As make the angels weep.'

It may be within the recollection of the readers of 'London Society' that last month I made some observations on Mr. A. R. Wallace's experiences of 'Spiritualism,' as detailed in the pages of the 'Fortnightly Review' for May. I stated that, while I was quite prepared to admit that the alleged phenomena had actually occurred, I did not consider that sufficient evidence was adduced as to the cause of those phenomena to persuade me that they were to be attributed to the intervention of the spirits of the dead. I admitted that I had never assisted at a *séance*, and it was objected in a quarter that commands my respect that I ought not to write about such matters without practical acquaintance with so-called 'spiritual' phenomena. I cannot allow that this is a reasonable canon of criticism. The disciples of the spiritualistic theories write papers which are intended to convince the world that their theories are deserving of general acceptance, and they adduce arguments from certain facts which have, they say, occurred within their own experience as proofs of the truth of their theories. These arguments are obviously intended for those who are without the charmed circle of the mediumistic society, and they must deal with the process of reasoning that is submitted for their consideration. Happily for the free ventilation of thought, it is the custom of editors nowadays to admit into their columns both sides of great social questions, and therefore I venture, very briefly, to make a few further observations upon Mr. Wallace's concluding paper on 'Modern Spiritualism,' which may be read in the 'Fortnightly Review' for June.

No one can deny that the circumstances stated to have hap-

pened in Mr. Wallace's two papers are of a sufficiently startling character. Every reader must regret that they are not backed up with the endorsement of recognised men of science. It is true that Mr. Wallace calls upon us 'to consider the long roll of men of ability who, commencing the inquiry as sceptics, left it as believers;' but, unfortunately, he omits to give the names of these able persons—an omission which, with due regard to the occasion, seems to be a great mistake. Mr. Wallace certainly mentions the names of some five or six gentlemen who are said to have confirmed the truth of spiritualism; but unfortunately, again, these names, eminently respectable as no doubt they are, are scarcely of sufficient weight to convince the world of its ignorance. And one witness, who is confidently cited, gives evidence entirely contrary to Mr. Wallace's conclusions. I refer to Sergeant Cox, from whose book, 'What am I?' I shall quote a little farther on.

But if I am not allowed to challenge the mysteries of spiritualism without having passed through the sublime initiations, I presume I may, as a simple catechumen whose place is only on the threshold of the temple, be permitted to make a note or two of those 'Lessons of Modern Spiritualism' which Mr. Wallace conceives to be 'important.' I pass over the paragraph about the 'demon' of Socrates, for it is not necessary to go to spiritualism for a solution of the well-known problem. All men of high-wrought and much-worked intellectual powers have their 'demons' in one shape or another, and Mr. Wallace unconsciously offers an explanation when he asserts that man is a duality. Christian philosophy goes farther, and defines man as composed of body, soul, and spirit. Nor is it necessary

to examine theories as to the ancient Pythoness, or as to the oracles which poetical tradition relates became dumb when the influences of Christianity asserted their sublimer sway. But when we come to the statement, that when Christ fed five thousand men with bread and fish not sufficient for a dozen, He was only exercising a power which is 'still daily at work amongst us,' we may fairly ask if spiritualism can afford for a testimony any such material miracle as that?

Mr. Wallace goes on to say that 'the miracles of the saints, when well attested, come into the same category.' Yes; but what is the attestation worth? The first question to be asked before these traditional miracles can be brought in evidence is, Are these miracles sufficiently supported by the strict rules of evidence so as to command our unhesitating belief? The fact that in the Roman Catholic Church they need only be held as 'pious opinions,' is enough for their dismissal in their character of proofs; and Mr. Wallace rather gets himself into a difficulty when he adds, 'Modern Roman Catholic miracles become intelligible facts. Spirits whose affections and passions are strongly excited in favour of Catholicism produce those appearances of the Virgin and of saints which they know will tend to increase religious fervour. The appearance itself may be an objective reality, while it is only an inference that it is the Virgin Mary—an inference which every intelligent spiritualist would reject as in the highest degree improbable.' Why improbable? Why should the inference be more improbable than the appearance from which it is drawn? If the apparition is not the Virgin Mary, who is it? Are we to fall back upon the

notion of 'lying spirits'? I fear Mr. Wallace leaves us no alternative. And if 'spirits' can be so grossly deceptive, we may well decline any more intimate acquaintance with them.

I now come to Mr. Wallace's statement that 'the recently-discussed question of the efficacy of prayer receives a perfect solution by spiritualism. . . . A striking case is that of George Müller, of Bristol, who has now for forty-four years depended wholly for his own support, and that of his wonderful charities, on answer to prayer. . . . He never asked any one or allowed any one to be asked, directly or indirectly, for a penny. No subscriptions or collections were ever made; yet from 1830 (when he married without any income whatever) he has lived, brought up a family, and established institutions which have steadily increased, till now four thousand orphan children are educated and in part supported. . . . His one and only resource has been secret prayer.' With sorrow I confess that though I have lived in the neighbourhood of Bristol, and have read daily papers as long as I can remember, I never heard of Mr. Müller before; and I agree with Mr. Wallace that this is a case which ought to be investigated by the sceptics of the 'Contemporary Review.' Now Mr. Wallace's explanation of Mr. Müller's success is, that his large-hearted charity attracted a number of spiritual beings towards him, and that they acted upon material wealthy beings, who suddenly felt themselves impelled to send large donations to Mr. George Müller. But is it not much simpler to believe, as apparently Mr. Müller himself believes, that the Almighty heard his prayers and answered them, without our calling in the aid of mediumistic powers for an

explanation? The simplest Christian believes that the Holy Spirit of God suggests good and benevolent thoughts, and the mere reading of the 'Narrative of some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller' may satisfactorily explain the wealth that has flowed in upon him, without calling in supernatural agencies. Without detracting from the efficacy of prayer, we may express a hope that the pecuniary success which has attended Mr. Müller's wrestlings will not at once induce a large number of young men to marry with no more substantial marriage settlement than Mr. Müller could give, or it is to be feared that pauperism will largely increase. Indeed, we should regard Mr. Müller himself with more unfeigned respect if he had followed the example of the Apostle Paul, and had denied himself the luxury of a wife.

But perhaps the best reply that an outside inquirer may make to the rather confident conclusions which Mr. Wallace draws as to the agency of the spirits of the dead in the strange phenomena which are alleged to have taken place, is to be found in the pages of a work by Mr. Serjeant Cox, entitled 'What am I?' This learned gentleman was, as has already been noted in the columns of this Magazine, a member of the committee of the Dialectical Society, which undertook to investigate the phenomena of Spiritualism; and the result at which Serjeant Cox arrives is that there are certain persons in whom a strange and abnormal power is developed, which he calls psychic or soul force. He tells us that the study of psychology begins where physiology leaves off, and he gives us many and adequate reasons for entertaining the belief that there are more things in

heaven and earth than have hitherto been dreamed of in our philosophy. He has witnessed under multiform conditions the remarkable incidents to which Mr. Wallace alludes, and he wholly discards the notion of imposture or legerdemain with which an incredulous generation dismisses the marvels of a legitimate *séance*. Occupying a judicial position, and trained in the severe habits of sifting truth by the strict laws which govern legal evidence, Serjeant Cox has, after investigation spread over some years, arrived at the conclusion that the intelligence that directs these phenomena, which nevertheless are of undoubted occurrence, is *not* that of spirits of dead human beings. And he gives twenty well-argued reasons why he considers such a theory as Mr. Wallace's to be untenable. I recommend all persons who take any interest in these questions to study the two volumes entitled 'What am I?'—for, to the psychological student, they present matter of great interest. From his argument against spiritual agency I have only space to make the following excerpt:—

'Personally, I have been assured many times that some member of my family, or some dear friend who had passed away from earth, was communicating with me by the rapping or writing. I noticed that the alleged spirit was always that of some person whom I had strongly in my mind at the moment, who was not nearer nor dearer to me than many others who did not make themselves known to me. Asked, "Who are you?" the name was rightly given. Usually some commonplace communications were made, such as "I am glad to be with you;" "I am very happy;" "I am often by your side." Desirous to test the identity of my inter-

locutor, I have put questions that were answered readily. Some were right, but some were wrong, and still more were so equivocal that it was obvious the communicant was *guessing*, and not *knowing*. To perfect the test, I have put test questions, such as "Do you remember when you fell from your horse, and broke your arm?" In such cases the answer was always "Yes," although no such accident had ever occurred. This was not an accidental or occasional result of the test; it was invariable. Never once did the alleged spirit of my relative or friend correct me by answering that nothing of the kind had ever happened. I have tried another test. Keeping the idea of a living friend strictly in my mind, I have received answers to my questions as if from that friend; and if, in the presence of the psychic, I have purposely uttered a name as if it had interested me, that name was almost certain to present itself as a present spirit. Moreover, the communications are, for the most part, unworthy of the persons to whom they are attributed, or not in keeping with their characters—unless the psychic has some knowledge of them—and then they express just such characteristics as the psychic might be supposed to attach to such a personage, often being very unlike the original. When the spirits of men who had been distinguished for genius in their earth-life appear, as often they do, I have never in a single instance found them to support their asserted characters in thought or language; proving this, at least, that they must have degenerated sadly since their passage from this life to another. Two or three instances will illustrate this. A communication asserted itself to be by

the late Dr. Elliottson: "Do you remember me?" I asked. "Yes, well." "My name?" answered rightly (it was, of course, known to the psychic). "Do you remember my visit to your two patients?" "Yes, you were much interested." I now bethought me of a test: "Do you remember my asking Elizabeth to bring the book from the library?" "Yes, well." "And reading it to me without opening it?" "Yes." "And what I said?" "You said it was marvellous. It convinced you." Now all this was a pure invention for the purpose of trying the truth of the alleged personality. No such incident ever occurred. It proved that, whatever was the intelligence communicating, it was not the spirit of Dr. Elliottson. Again, sitting with another psychic, communication was declared to be made by a spirit who professed to have prophetic powers. This spirit prophesied of me that in a few weeks I should put on a black cap and sentence a woman to be hung. It was, of course, known to the psychic that I occupied a judicial office, but he did *not* know that the jurisdiction of quarter sessions is limited, and that I had not power to inflict capital punishment. So the ignorance of the psychic was manifestly reflected by the spirit. . . . These are but a few of the facts that appear to me to disprove the theory that the communicating intelligences are spirits of the dead. . . . In the honest pursuit of truth, I am bound to state that not only have I been unable to obtain personally any evidence whatever that any of the phenomena are produced by spirits of the dead, but all the evidence I have been able to collect tends to negative that conclusion.

FREE LANCE.

NEW BOOKS RECEIVED.

'A Chequered Life.' Edited by the Vicomtesse Solange de Kerkadec. *Henry S. King & Co.*

'Civil Service.' By F. T. Listado. *Henry S. King & Co.*

'The House of Raby.' By Mrs. G. Hooper. *Henry S. King & Co.*

'The Poetical Works of Robert Buchanan.' *Henry S. King & Co.*

'Persia, Ancient and Modern.' By John Piggot. *H. S. King & Co.*

'A String of Pearls.' By W. Watkins Old. *Bemrose & Sons.*

'Verses for Children and the Childlike.' By Frederick Edward Weatherly, M.A. *J. Masters & Co.*

'Art Intellectual, not Mechanical.' By Vivian Arthur Webber. *H. N. Mills, Ryde.*

'Aileen Ferrera.' By Susan Morley. *Henry S. King & Co.*

'A CHEQUERED LIFE' does not fulfil the promise of its youth. It opens so well with an account of the Imperial House of Ecouen, where about six hundred of the daughters of the Emperor's officers were educated, and is intersected with so many interesting anecdotes of Napoleon I. and the Empress Josephine, that we are almost tempted to believe it is the record of a real life we are perusing. Had Madame de Kerkadec proved capable of pursuing the adventures of Madame de Léoville-Meilhan in the same style, she might have produced a graphic and interesting picture of French domestic life at the period named. But the second part of the narrative falls off sadly, and it is but too evident where the author has ceased to draw on memory—or fact—and commenced to depend on her own imagination. The heroine, having been twice married and widowed, comes to England, where every other man she meets wishes to marry her; and when the only one she does

like proposes to her, she rejects him, only to fall desperately in love with him after he has married another woman. Finally he dies in her house, where she can indulge her passion as much as she likes over his dead body. 'Tightly I wound my arms round his neck, I kissed his pale brow, his sweet orbs which could never again return my loving gaze, his cheeks, his neck: and for hours thus did I keep in my warm embrace him who could no longer feel or know what boundless love had been mine.' All this is false sentiment, and it is a great pity Madame de Kerkadec ever introduced it to a story which commenced so fairly.

'Civil Service' is open to much the same criticism. It begins brightly and freshly, but it lags a little towards the end. A contested will and property, and all the roguery dependent thereon, are rather stale materials to build a story with. Still Mr. Listado's tale is interesting: he has brought some new and original characters on the stage, and his young women are especially natural. Hugh Houghton is one of those clumsy half-and-half villains, however, with whom it is difficult to sympathise. The public, as a rule, cannot get up any interest in the narration of every-day crime. They have lost their curiosity on the subject; they see too much of it at home. Give them an out-and-out scoundrel, and they follow his career with eagerness. But they don't care to hear how a man did a thing which they could, in all probability, do much better themselves. At the same time, we recommend 'Civil Service' to all novel readers.

'The House of Raby' is a cheap reprint of Mrs. G. Hooper's clever

and interesting romance. Here is a narrative which, though perhaps not possessing much more ingenuity in its construction than the majority, carries one on from the first page to the last from the absorbing force of its subject. It ought to have a large circulation in its present dress.

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The third and last volume of Robert Buchanan's Poetical Works has now appeared. It will be followed shortly by Vols. IV. and V., which will contain the prose writings of the same author. Mr. Buchanan has been called the master of the *Fleshly* school of poetry, a term which might deter some from seeking a more intimate acquaintance with his works. We would rather style him the master of the human heart and human nature; for through all the beauty of his imagination and versification, one great fact is apparent: the evident feeling which he possesses in himself and for others. 'The Soul and the Dwelling' is one example amongst many of the former, and 'Nell' of the latter, truth. His songs must come like reflections of its own thoughts to every feeling and sympathetic heart.

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We suppose it is the visit of the Shah that has produced Mr. Piggot's volume, the second portion of which (that treating of modern Persia) is likely to be the more interesting of the two to the general reader. The account of ancient Persia is simply a compilation from well-known writers; indeed none of the narrative appears to have been written from personal observation, which greatly detracts from its interest. As a book of reference it will, however, be found useful, and that is the most we can say for it.

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There are different kinds of 'strings of pearls,' false and real pearls; and we cannot number Mr. Old's verses amongst the latter. His verses are not above the average of those to be found in the portfolios of most aspirants to literature, and if every one who can string a few jingling rhymes together were to exclaim with Mr. Old, in his 'Cry of Genius'—

'Let me go. What though the buds be
dowered

Fatally—in maturity to wane!

Oh, martyred Semele! oh, sphynx-de-
voured!

Thy yearnings mine—thy doom!
It is in vain.

Let me go.—

the only alternative for the minority would be to 'go' too, where they were not compelled to peruse their 'cries.' Mr. Old's stanzas were doubtless very appropriate and very grateful to the friends for whom they were written, but unless for private circulation, they were hardly worth putting into print.

* * * *

A very different task is the perusal of the extremely modest little pamphlet that comes to us under the name of 'Verses for Children and the Childlike.' Mr. F. E. Weatherly is well known in these pages and elsewhere for his very sweet and unpretentious poetry, much of which has been set to music by some of the best composers of the day. The collection before us will not be found inferior to anything he has yet written; and those who enjoy communion with fresh, simple thoughts clothed in pure verse cannot do better than send for this inexpensive little volume.

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'Art Intellectual, not Mechanical.' This book has been sent to us by the author, with an especial request for review. We have not read Mr. Webber's former essays; but, whilst cordially agreeing with

his opening argument, that art is a purely intellectual pursuit, we cannot think that he carries it through. For what then is the meaning of this italicised sentence: '*Many a student attributes to deficiency of talent what in reality is want of well-directed study,*' followed by the assertion that the author knows 'what it is to go on learning the same dull lesson day by day, almost despairing of success'? Surely this is reducing art to a mechanical study, instead of attributing it to inspirational genius. Mr. Webber quotes Sir Joshua Reynolds' remark: 'Genius begins where rules end.' This is true so far, that genius without rule is a boat without a rudder; but if the talent has not displayed itself before the rule, it will scarcely do so afterwards. Mr. Webber means well, but he has not the power to express all he means. We like his subject better than his mode of treating it. The first is beyond criticism; but the second, were it not the work of an amateur, we could criticise more severely than we have done.

'Aileen Ferrers' is a novel whose merits in some respects are above the average, and whose faults are not ineffaceable; but its general mediocrity will never insure it a prominent position.

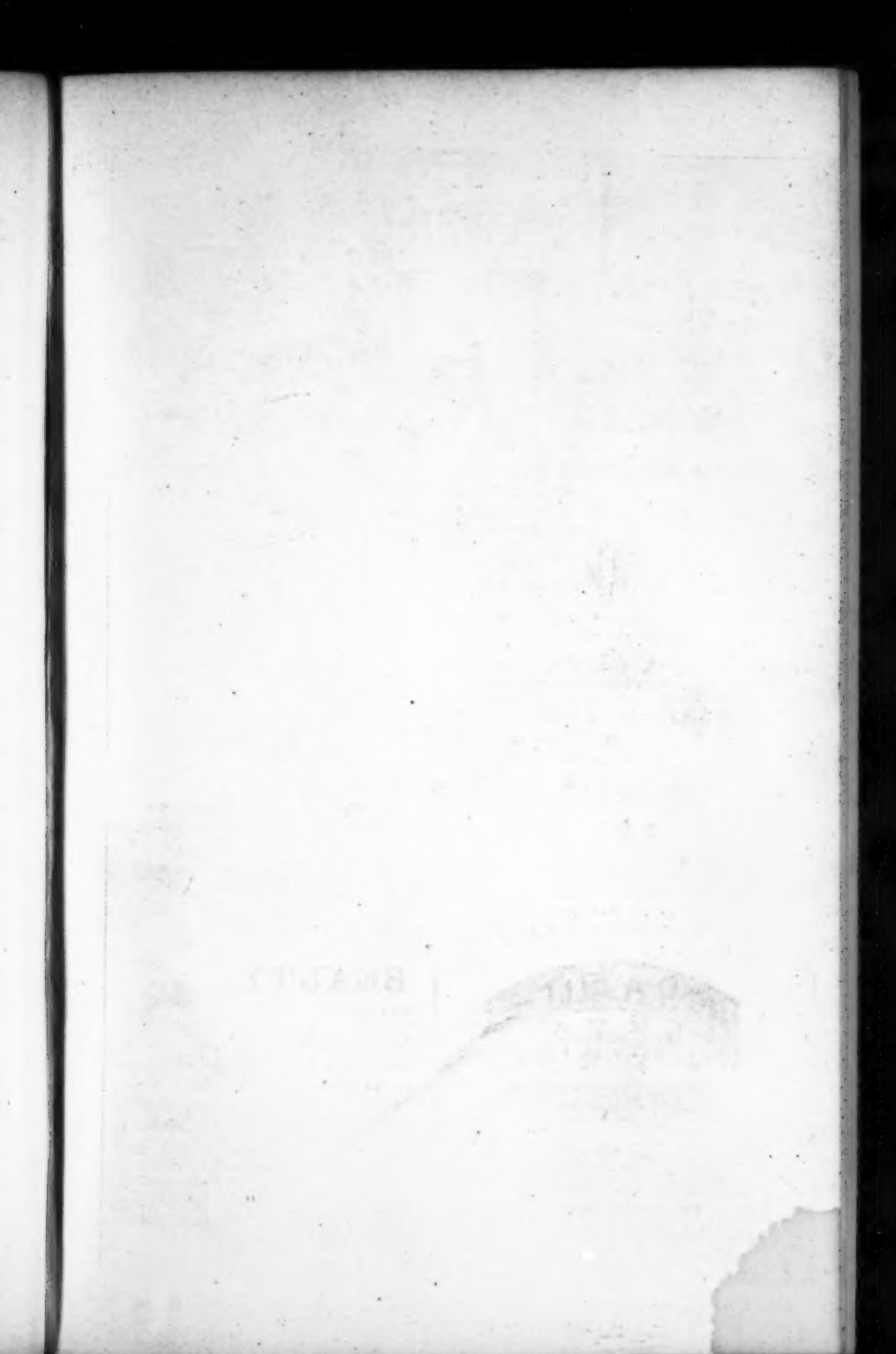
Aileen Ferrers, the child of an unfortunate marriage, is brought up by the obscure and humble relations of her mother till the age of sixteen, when she is suddenly transplanted to the home of her father's aristocratic connections, having first plighted her troth to a certain chivalrous gamekeeper, and promised to become his wife after five years. The period elapses, and, although the transition from obscurity to wealth and fashion has caused a natural revulsion of

feeling, Aileen's honour compels her to return to fulfil her contract. The high-souled Ralph, however, releases her from her hasty promise, and she again leaves her early friends to become the wife of one Basil Lushington, a man whose love is never hinted at until the exigencies of the story require its aid.

It will be seen from the above upon what slight and crude materials the basis of the tale is laid, and what a lack of power characterises the development of the plot. The characters are inconsistent, and their actions are prompted by a terrible want of motive, which renders the sequence of incidents disjointed. The heroine is charming and unaffected; but it is difficult to credit a girl who has lived for sixteen years in the company of housekeepers and farmers with the tact and intelligence that Aileen Ferrers must have been fortunate enough to possess, to enable her to pass, unscathed by dialect or action, from a life among the lower classes to the many exigencies of manner, conversation, and etiquette in the society of the 'Upper Ten.' Miss Morley has, moreover, missed a chance by making so slight a sketch of Ralph, whose character affords such opportunities for delineation of strong and varied passions.

With all its faults, however, 'Aileen Ferrers' is readable, and its chief claim rests upon its easy and natural style, which is entirely free from those slang expressions and newly-coined words which mar the pages of so many novels of the day.

Miss Morley is to be congratulated upon her effort to render her story acceptable without the aid of such tricky baits for popularity as fast conversation or immoral tone.





Drawn by Harrison Weir.]

LONDON SOCIETY AT THE DOG SHOW.

LONDON SOCIETY.

AUGUST, 1874.

ABOVE SUSPICION.

By Miss J. H. BROWNE.

CHAPTER I.

ABOUT WEST GREEN AND TOTTENHAM AND THE GROWING OF A TOWN.

SIXTEEN years ago no more rural village could have been found within five miles of the General Post Office than West Green. It was as utterly in the country as though situated a hundred miles from London, and by a natural consequence it was country in its ways, habits, and manners.

The various lanes leading to it from Stamford Hill, Tottenham, Hornsey, and Southgate were rural, which they certainly are not now. In those days Philip Lane was not a street, with houses all along one side, as is the case at present. Neither had any building societies invaded the sacred quiet of the road, bordered by wheat-fields and meadows, which led off to the Queen's Road, then as pretty a roadside public as the heart of a traveller need have desired to see now refronted, redecorated, and adorned with tea-gardens and other modern innovations of a like description.

But for Hanger Lane, no one had yet dreamed of the evil days to come, when mushroom villas should be built upon ground that not long before was regarded as an irreclaimable moor—when first a tavern and then a church (the two variable possessors of that which, in some unobscured season, we call a village) appeared on the scene,

and brought London following at their heels—when the common lands were inclosed and laid out in plots on which more houses were erected—when little by-roads were made leading to meadows then innocent of brick and mortar, but soon destined to be covered with small two-storey tenements—when, in a word, Hanger Lane should be improved off the face of the earth, and in the interests of speculative builders (who had come entirely of their own accord to spoil it), called as it is at present, St. Ann's Road.

Everything is done very quietly nowadays, and it has only taken sixteen years to change West Green from an extremely pretty village to an extremely disagreeable suburb.

The Londoners, who come through it from a village, are going to London, and naturally, then, but it does not seem to grow any more, and if the process is not stopped, find a landscape of a kind which might have been to be seen running its straight line to the eastern horizon, and a happy sort.

A new village has been opened quite close to the village. New streets—baker's streets—stretch on the one pleasant point, the old horse-road which had periodically to overflow and spread half across the highway is now fenced